3 Content Standards and Instructional Practices

Kindergarten Through Grade Three

Although all the skills within strands are important, no greater responsibility exists for educators of students in kindergarten through grade three than to ensure that each student in their care leaves the third grade able to read fluently, effortlessly, independently, and enthusiastically.

The period spanning kindergarten through grade three is the most critical for instruction in the language arts. During that time students acquire the foundational skills needed for later academic, social, and economic success. By the end of the third grade, students should be able to (1) read complex word forms accurately and fluently in connected texts and decode multisyllabic words independently; (2) read grade-level narrative and expository texts and recall sequence, main ideas, and supporting details; and (3) write compositions that describe familiar events and experiences and construct complete, correct sentences to communicate their ideas. In addition, they should be able not only to respond to questions but also to make well-organized oral presentations centered on major points of information. As a result of their new skills, they are beginning to enjoy the richness of ideas expressed in books. Achievement of those skills by the end of the third grade is the goal for all students. Students achieve those skills by building on a progression of carefully specified and strategically sequenced content standards and instruction that begins in kindergarten.

Proficiency is based on critical building blocks in each grade. Some of the building blocks (e.g., vocabulary development, analysis of narrative text) span kindergarten through grade three, and others (e.g., phonemic awareness, concepts about print) are mastered in specific grades. The building blocks and their importance to overall language arts success in kindergarten through grade three are profiled in this chapter. An overview is followed by grade-specific summaries and instructional analyses for kindergarten through grade three.

Reading Word Analysis, Fluency, and Systematic Vocabulary Development

The standards for word analysis, fluency, and systematic vocabulary development are a key part of development in kindergarten through grade three. Although readers access words in many ways (whole words, decoding, word parts, and context), research has found that decoding, or the ability to apply knowledge of letter-sound correspondences to identify words, is fundamental to independent word recognition. Good readers rely primarily on the letters in a word rather than context or pictures to identify familiar and unfamiliar words (Ehri, 1994). The fluency good readers have with word recognition makes us think they read whole words at a time. In fact, fluent readers process virtually every letter in a word (Adams, 1990). The speed and facility with which they recognize words differentiate good readers from less successful readers.

Automaticity is the ability to recognize a word (or series of words in text) effortlessly and rapidly. The foundations of automatic word recognition begin in kindergarten through developing phonemic awareness and learning the sounds associated with letters as well as concepts about print. Phonemic awareness, the ability to hear and manipulate the sounds of language, is a key indicator for students who learn to read easily versus children who continue to have difficulty. Instruction in phonemic

awareness begins in kindergarten and concludes with more complex activities by the middle of the first grade. By the middle of kindergarten, students should be tested on phonemic awareness. Beginning in kindergarten and continuing into the first grade, children should be explicitly taught the process of blending individual sounds into words. For example, the printed word *man* is converted into its component letters (*m a n*), then into its corresponding sounds, each sound being held as readers progress to the next sound (*mmmmmaaaaannnn*). This explicit blending process is temporary yet critical as children advance in the word-recognition process.

In the late first grade and continuing through the second and third grades, students focus on two dimensions of word recognition—advanced word recognition skills and automaticity. In the first grade they progress from vowel-consonant and consonant-vowel-consonant word types to consonant blends, vowel digraphs, and *r*-controlled letter-sound associations. Inflected endings and word roots are added to extend word-recognition abilities. In the second grade decoding and word-recognition skills take on greater sophistication with the addition of multisyllabic words and more complex spelling patterns. In both the second grade and the third grade, more advanced decoding strategies focus on how to break up multisyllabic words and employ morphemic analysis (analyzing affixes and word roots). The second-grade and third-grade curriculum also focuses on orthographic knowledge; that is, recognizing larger, more complex chunks of letters (e.g., *ight*, *ierce*) to enhance fluency.

Proficient readers, writers, and speakers develop fluency with the fundamental skills and strategies. *Fluency is defined as the accuracy and rate with which students perform reading tasks.* In oral reading it includes additional dimensions that involve the quality of such reading (e.g., expression and intonation). To be considered fluent readers, students must perform a task or demonstrate a skill or strategy accurately, quickly, and effortlessly.

Fluency in kindergarten through grade three involves a wide range of skills and strategies (e.g., identifying letter names, producing sounds associated with letters, blending letter-sounds into words, reading connected text, spelling words, and writing sentences). Instruction in developing fluency must focus first on explicit opportunities for the student to learn the skill or strategy. Once a skill is learned, fluency develops as a result of multiple opportunities to practice the skill or strategy with a high rate of success. For early decoding in the first grade, students read stories in which there are a high percentage of words composed of taught letter-sound correspondences and a few previously taught sight words.

An important feature of language arts instruction in kindergarten through grade three is vocabulary development, beginning in kindergarten with direct instruction in specific categories of words and progressing to understanding the relations of such words as synonyms and antonyms and the importance of structural features of words (affixes) to word meaning (Beck, McKeown, and Kucan, 2002). Wide reading is essential to learning vocabulary and must be an integral component of instruction. At first the teacher should read literary and expository texts to students, exposing them to

vocabulary they are not yet able to read. As students develop proficiency in word recognition, they are taught independent word-learning strategies, such as learning meanings from context and using dictionaries and glossaries as instructional resources.

The primary means by which students learn new words is through independent reading. The volume of that reading is crucial (Cunningham and Stanovich, 1998). The authors acknowledge the strong relationship between decoding and vocabulary, noting that decoding skill mediates reading volume and thus vocabulary size. Therefore, one of the most effective strategic strikes educators can make in helping students develop vocabulary growth is to teach them to become fluent readers and encourage them to read extensively. In a study of independent reading, Anderson, Wilson, and Fielding (1988) found that the difference between children scoring at the ninetieth percentile in the amount of out-of-school independent reading and those scoring at the second percentile was approximately 21 minutes of independent reading per day. By the fourth grade students should read one-half million words of running text independently (see Chapter 4, page 114). Therefore, the process and benefits of independent reading must begin in the earlier grades.

Reading Reading Comprehension

An important building block in kindergarten through grade three is instruction in strategies related to reading comprehension, including how to predict what will happen in a text, how to compare information between sources, and how to answer essential questions. The foundation for this proficiency begins in kindergarten, when students receive explicit instruction and opportunities to answer simple questions about *who* and *what*. More abstract *why* and *what if* questions are mastered in the first and second grades. Although kindergarten nonreaders use the strategies orally in response to the

teacher reading the text, more proficient readers also apply the strategies to the text they themselves read. Direct teaching and modeling of the strategies and readers' application of the strategies to the text they hear and read increase the ability of students to develop literal and inferential understanding, increase vocabulary, and make connections between parts of a text, between separate texts, and between text and personal experience.

Most students require explicit instruction in strategies related to reading comprehension, just as they do for decoding. Before the students listen to or read a story or informational passage, the teacher must bring to bear relevant student experiences and prior knowledge, develop knowledge of the topic, and teach critical, unfamiliar vocabulary. And the students should engage in predictions about upcoming text that are based on titles and pictures. While the students are reading, the teacher should introduce questions strategically to focus attention on critical information and encourage the students to monitor comprehension by self-questioning and returning to the text to fill in gaps in comprehension. When the students have finished reading, they should engage in analysis and synthesis, retelling, summarizing, and acting on information, such as placing events in sequential order. *Recommended Literature: Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve* (California Department of Education [CDE], 2002) lists high-quality, complex materials to be read by students.

Reading Literary Response and Analysis

In kindergarten through grade three, students develop their ability to analyze literature and distinguish between the structural features of narrative text (e.g., characters, theme,

plot, setting) and the various forms of narrative (e.g., myths, legends, fables). They learn the commonalities in narrative text and develop a schema or map for stories. Again, the standards progress from kindergarten, where analysis focuses on the characters, settings, and important events, to more sophisticated story elements (e.g., plot in the first grade, comparison of elements in the second grade, and theme in the third grade). Although kindergartners and early first graders also develop the strategies orally in response to text that has been read aloud, older students increasingly develop comprehension strategies through text they read and in conjunction with direct teaching and modeling of strategies.

Writing Writing Strategies and Applications

Students in kindergarten through grade three develop foundational writing strategies, applications, and conventions. They begin by forming uppercase and lowercase letters and using their knowledge of letters and sounds to write words. That knowledge of the alphabetic principle continues in the first grade as students write sentences. By the second grade writing extends to paragraphs, and by the third grade students write paragraphs with topic sentences. In penmanship students progress from legible printing in the first grade to the use of cursive or jointed italic in the third grade.

The systematic progression of instruction and application from kindergarten through grade three prepares students to write clear and coherent sentences and paragraphs that develop a central idea. Their writing shows clear purpose and awareness of audience as they refine their ability to use writing to describe and explain objects, events, and experiences (see page 93 in this chapter).

In the first grade another essential building block is introduced; that is, writing as a process. The act of writing is made up of a set of thinking and composing processes used selectively by a writer. Students learn that writing consists of several iterative phases (i.e., prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and postwriting) that vary depending on the purpose and audience for writing. Students are also taught, however, that they are not limited to using the various phases all the time or in any fixed order. Instruction continues in the second and third grades and beyond. Throughout those grades the dimensions of organization, grammar, sentence structure, spelling, basic punctuation and capitalization, and handwriting are introduced and extended progressively.

With its emphasis on planning and revising for clarity, the writing process helps students understand that writing is not the same as speech written down. Direct instruction in more specific writing strategies also helps students understand how to go beyond writing down conversation. Of particular interest here are ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, and conventions. The first five involve content (rather than spelling and mechanics) and directly address aspects of decontexualized communication that many students find challenging. They are discussed fully in Spandel (1998).

Written and Oral English-Language Conventions

In kindergarten through grade three, written and oral English-language conventions are integrated with the respective strands (writing applications, speaking applications) where they are most directly applied. Over the course of the four-year span, students learn to write and punctuate declarative, interrogative, imperative, and exclamatory sentences.

Spelling instruction and proficiency progress in the first grade from phonetic stages, during which children learn to represent all of the prominent phonemes in simple words, to more advanced phonetic, rule-governed, and predictable patterns of spelling in the second and third grades (Moats, 2000, 1995). Kindergarten and first-grade students will progress from prephonetic to phonetic stages of spelling as they begin to write. The National Research Council (1998) states that temporary spellings, specifically those used in the phonetic stage, can be "helpful for developing understanding of the identity and segmentation of speech sounds and sound-spelling relationships. Conventionally correct spelling should be developed through focused instruction and practice. Primary children should be expected to spell previously studied words and spelling patterns correctly in their final writing products." Fundamental skills in sentence structure, grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling become building blocks for more advanced applications.

Listening and Speaking Listening and Speaking Strategies and Speaking Applications

In kindergarten through grade three, students develop listening and speaking strategies and speaking applications that parallel and reinforce instruction in the other language arts. For example, as students learn to identify the major elements in stories, they practice retelling stories and include characters, settings, and major events. When speaking, they need systematic opportunities to use the vocabulary introduced in reading and writing. Students are taught to listen and follow instructions that begin as one-step directions in kindergarten and progress to three and four steps in the second and third grades.

Making Connections for Students

Instructional materials must help students make connections between standards and between skills and strategies. For example, students must learn not only to hear and manipulate the sounds in words but also to practice skills and integrate them into beginning reading and spelling activities. However, if they practice writing sentences with correct punctuation and capitalization but never apply those skills in larger contexts or for authentic purposes, instruction is fragmented and the skills without purpose. The goal in language arts instruction must, therefore, be to ensure that component parts (skills, strategies, structures) are identified; are carefully sequenced according to their complexity and use in more advanced writing applications; are developed to mastery; and are progressively and purposefully connected and then incorporated with authentic learning exercises, including those presented in the study of history–social science, mathematics, and science.

A transformation takes place in learners between kindergarten and the third grade. A typical kindergartner enters school with little formal knowledge of academic requirements and uses of language. Exiting third graders who have mastered the code are able to access, comprehend, compose, discuss, and enjoy a wide range of literature and informational text. Their transformation comes from the systematic and strategic design and delivery of instruction anchored to the English–language arts content standards. Students who acquire necessary skills and knowledge early have a high probability of continued academic success. But students who fail to learn the fundamental skills and knowledge of the alphabetic writing system by the third grade will find themselves in relentless pursuit of the standards and will need extra support to arrive at grade level. Critical to the task are well-trained classroom teachers and teaching specialists who plan and implement lessons and assessments based on standards and current research and who are tireless in their efforts to teach all children to read, write, speak, and listen well.

Teaching Students to Read: A Special Priority

Although all the skills within strands are important, no greater responsibility exists for educators of students in kindergarten through grade three than to ensure that each student in their care leaves the third grade able to read fluently, effortlessly, independently, and enthusiastically. Each student must understand the relation of print to speech, the sound structure of language, and the alphabetic principle and be able to

apply those abilities to grade-level text. Effective instruction in reading nurtures both comprehension and fluency in word recognition. Concentration on the skills that build word recognition are critically important in the early primary grades.

Learning to read is the most important skill that students develop during their early academic years. Moreover, converging evidence reveals that the kindergarten through grade three span is the optimal period of time for such learning. Students who fail to read fluently by the end of the third grade have only a minimal chance of achieving literacy competence without specific interventions (Felton and Pepper, 1995; Juel, 1988; Torgesen, 2001).

What is particularly intriguing and elusive about reading is that despite its complexity, skillful reading looks like an easy and natural thing to do. On the contrary, reading requires deliberate and systematic human intervention and context (Armbruster, Lehr, and Osborn, 2001; Kame'enui, 1996; National Reading Panel, 2000). The process of reading is learned. Although some students become skillful readers without systematic instruction, many others need intense, systematic instruction in reading to succeed—a need that has not been fully recognized or addressed. Scientific research has made considerable progress in gaining an understanding of what the components of reading instruction should be and how many more students can be helped to learn to read successfully. Our knowledge is not yet absolute in some areas, and many important questions remain to be answered. Nevertheless, we know that learning to read in an

alphabetic writing system requires that we attend tenaciously to the features of that writing system and make explicit and conspicuous the key features of the system. Otherwise, large numbers of students will be at risk of not learning to read well.

Becoming a fluent and skillful reader requires extensive engagement with the English language, including:

- Listening to words and to the sounds inside of words
- Hearing and talking about stories
- Gaining facility with the concepts of print
- Understanding the sounds that make up our language
- Manipulating the sounds and relating the specific sounds to printed letters and words
- Connecting words with events, actions, things, and ideas and expressing those ideas in writing
- Learning about the connection between sounds, letters, syllables, words, and concepts
- Gaining an understanding of the structure of stories and informational text and relating events to personal experiences

Reading as a process is more than it appears to be. Because it does not come naturally to many students, the parts, especially the important parts, must be taught strategically and intentionally as an absolute priority. To improve reading achievement, we must fully understand and appreciate the complexity and primacy of early reading instruction. The dimensions of beginning reading are like the strands of a strong rope. Like such a rope, the strength of the reading process depends on the strength of the individual strands, the strategic integration of all the strands, and the effective binding or

connecting of the strands (Chard, Simmons, and Kame'enui, 1998). First, it is critical that the strands, including vocabulary acquisition, concepts about print, phonemic awareness, decoding and word recognition, knowledge of the structure of stories, and listening comprehension are robust, stable, and reliable. Next, the strength of the reading process depends on strategic integration of the strands to produce readers who can apply their skills in a variety of contexts and tasks.

An important principle in early reading instruction is that skills from all strands must be part of the students' reading programs from kindergarten on. Emphasis on particular skills will differ over time and from student to student. For example, word-recognition skills should be transferred and applied, first with decodable text where students can apply and practice the skills reliably and then with quality literature and informational texts as students demonstrate an ability to apply skills and strategies successfully.

A second essential principle is that new skills must be integrated across strands to reinforce and extend learning. For example, words learned in word-reading exercises can be used in writing, and vocabulary from a story can be incorporated with speaking. Systematically establishing connections between new skills and authentic applications and between skills in one strand and applications in another is essential to retention and generalization.

The following sections profile and summarize the content of the language arts program for each grade level in kindergarten through grade three. Each grade-level description includes a summary of the content, relevant instructional analyses, content connections across domains, and curricular and instructional profiles.

Kindergarten Standards and Instructions

Reading

1.0 Word Analysis, Fluency, and Systematic Vocabulary Development

2.0 Reading Comprehension

3.0 Literary Response and Analysis

Writing

1.0 Writing Strategies

Written and Oral English-Language Conventions

1.0 Written and Oral English-Language Conventions

Listening and Speaking

1.0 Listening and Speaking Strategies

2.0 Speaking Applications (Genres and Their Characteristics)

Students enter kindergarten with a wide range of individual differences in prior opportunities to hear, see, and learn the English language and alphabetic writing system. Thus, the challenge for educators is to determine the essential skills kindergartners must master and the way to organize and deliver instruction of maximum effectiveness and efficiency that addresses the range of (1) the skills and knowledge to be taught; and (2) the capacity of the learners. Instruction in kindergarten is focused on developing foundational skills that prepare students for later learning in the language arts. The strands to be emphasized at the kindergarten level are listed in the adjacent column under the appropriate domains.

Each of the strands is addressed separately in the following section with the exception of the written and oral English-language conventions strand, which is integrated into appropriate sections.

Reading Word Analysis, Fluency, and Systematic Vocabulary Development

Concepts About Print

A primary focus of language arts instruction in kindergarten is making sense of the alphabet and its role in reading. Familiarity with the letters of the alphabet is a powerful predictor of early reading success (Ehri and McCormick, 1998). Moreover, letter-sound knowledge is not optional in an alphabetic writing system. By the end of kindergarten, students should be able to name all uppercase and lowercase letters and match all letters with their associated sounds.

Whether to teach letter names or letter-sound relationships first remains unsettled. Some reading programs recommend introducing letter names first because they are typically easier and more familiar to children. Others teach letter-sound relationships before letter names. Likewise, the treatment of uppercase and lowercase letters has varied. In some programs both uppercase and lowercase letters are introduced concurrently; in others the introduction of capital letters dissimilar to their lowercase letters is delayed.

The kindergarten experience should also expose students to a range of print forms and functions. Students learn to use conventions of print not only to negotiate print but also to aid comprehension (e.g., Reading Comprehension Standard 2.1). A recommended sequence is to present (1) the particular concept of print (e.g., books are read front to back, print moves from left to right), as would be done with any other basic concept; and (2) a learning activity in which books are used.

Phonemic Awareness

The most essential element of language arts instruction in kindergarten is the development of phonemic awareness; that is, teaching students the sound structure of language. Seven content standards (Reading Standards 1.7–1.13) progressively address phonemic awareness and its multiple dimensions. Phonemic awareness is:

1. The ability to hear and manipulate the sounds in spoken words and the understanding that spoken words and syllables are made up of sequences of speech sounds (Moats, 2000; Yopp, 1988). Early phonemic awareness is all auditory; it does not involve print.
2. Fundamental to later mapping speech to print. If a child cannot hear that *man* and *moon* begin with the same sound or cannot blend the sounds /rrrrruuuuunnnn/ to *run*, that child typically has difficulty connecting sounds with their written symbols.
3. Essential to learning to read in an alphabetic writing system because letters represent sounds or phonemes. Without phonemic awareness, phonics makes little sense.
4. A strong predictor of early reading success.

Instruction in phonemic awareness can span two years, kindergarten and first grade. But in this aspect of teaching as in others, the teacher must be guided by the students' developing competencies. Some students require little training in phonemic awareness; others might require quite a bit. Although early phonemic awareness is oral, the teacher must be careful not to delay in providing learning opportunities with print. Learning phonics and learning to decode and write words all help students continue to develop phonemic awareness. In addition, students who have developed or are successfully developing phonemic awareness should not have to spend an unnecessary amount of

time being instructed in such awareness. Adequate, ongoing assessment of student progress is essential. Oral activities in kindergarten should focus on such simple tasks as rhyming, matching words with beginning sounds, and blending sounds into words. Midyear screening of all students to determine their phonemic awareness and need for further instruction is also important.

In a review of phonemic awareness interventions to enhance the early reading achievement of students with and without disabilities, the following instructional strategies were found effective (Smith, Simmons, and Kame'enui, 1998):

1. Modeling phonemic awareness tasks and responses orally and following with students' production of the task
2. Making students' cognitive manipulations of sounds overt by using concrete representations (e.g., markers, pictures, and Elkonin boxes) or auditory cues that signal the movement of one sound to the next (e.g., claps)
3. Teaching skills explicitly and systematically
4. Adding letter-sound correspondence instruction to phonological awareness interventions after students demonstrate early phonemic awareness
5. Progressing from the easier phonemic awareness activities to the more difficult—from rhyming and sound matching to blending, segmentation, and manipulation
6. Focusing on segmentation or the combination of blending and segmenting
7. Starting with larger linguistic units (words and syllables) and proceeding to smaller linguistic units (phonemes)
8. Focusing beginning instruction on the phonemic level of phonological units with short words (two to three phonemes; e.g., *at, mud, run*)

9. Focusing first on the initial sound (*sat*), then on the final sound (*sat*), and lastly on the medial sound (*sat*) in words
10. Introducing several continuous sounds first (e.g., /m/, /r/, /s/) before introducing stop sounds (e.g., /t/, /b/, /k/) because stop sounds are more difficult to isolate
11. Providing brief instructional sessions (Significant gains in phonemic awareness are often made in 15 to 20 minutes of daily instruction and practice over a period of 9 to 12 weeks.)

Decoding and Word Recognition

In kindergarten students begin to work with words in three important ways: decoding, spelling, and writing. Decoding is of primary importance. The students learn the prerequisites (phonemic awareness, letter-sound correspondences) and requisites (blending individual letter-sound correspondences to read whole words) of decoding. The ability to associate consonant and vowel sounds with appropriate letters is fundamental to reliable decoding and will be the focus of the curricular and instructional profile presented later in this section.

The selection, sequencing, review, and practice of letter-sound correspondences require careful analysis to optimize successful early reading. Selected guidelines include:

- Scheduling high-utility letter sounds early in the sequence (e.g., /m/, /s/, /a/, /r/, /t/)
- Including a few short vowels early in the sequence so that students can use letter-sound knowledge to form and read words
- Sequencing instruction, separating the introduction of letter sounds that are easily confused (e.g., /p/, /b/, /v/; /e/, /i/)

- Using student knowledge of letter-sounds to help them read and spell words (The difficulty of the words students spell should parallel the difficulty of the word patterns they read. Further specifications for the procedures for teaching word reading are found in the first-grade presentation.)

Vocabulary and Concept Development

Curriculum and instruction in kindergarten must also develop understanding of concepts and vocabulary as building blocks of language: categories of color, shape, and words used in kindergarten instruction (e.g., *group, pair, same*). Vocabulary is developed through direct instruction in specific concepts and vocabulary and exposure to a broad and diverse vocabulary while listening to stories. For students who enter kindergarten with limited knowledge of vocabulary, special instruction in concept and language development should be provided to help close the widening vocabulary gap between them and their peers (Biemiller, 2001; Hart and Risley, 2003, 1995).

Teachers should identify vocabulary words critical to listening comprehension and teach those words directly. Factors that influence the learning of vocabulary are (1) providing multiple exposures to words; (2) selecting and teaching words that are important to understanding a story or are high-utility words; (3) having students process words deeply and in multiple contexts; and (4) providing definitional and contextual support (Beck, McKeown, and Kucan, 2002).

Reading Reading Comprehension

Most students are not able to read sophisticated stories in kindergarten on their own but learn to identify and use strategies to comprehend the stories that are read to them daily. In the kindergarten curriculum important strategies for teaching comprehension as

students listen to stories are (1) using pictures and context to make predictions; (2) retelling familiar stories; and (3) answering and asking questions about essential elements.

Factors to be considered when introducing comprehension strategies are:

1. Easing into instruction, beginning with stories containing obvious information and considering the complexity of the text
2. Controlling the difficulty of the task initially by introducing the strategy first in sentences and paragraphs and then in stories
3. Modeling multiple examples and providing extensive guided practice in listening-comprehension strategies
4. Inserting questions at strategic intervals to reduce the memory load for learners when introducing strategies in stories. (For example, have students retell the important events after each page rather than wait for the end of the story.)
5. Using both narrative and expository text

Reading Literary Response and Analysis

One of the most powerful structures students learn in kindergarten is the schema or map of stories. The elements of *story grammar* (see glossary) can be applied to most stories and provide students with an important anchor when listening to stories, recalling them, and eventually writing their own. Story grammar can be used as a framework for beginning to teach higher-level comprehension skills. Students who have learned story grammar can begin to summarize by using the elements to retell the story. In kindergarten three elements are introduced: setting, characters, and important events.

The remaining elements are gradually introduced in successive grades. Suggested strategies for teaching story elements are to:

- Introduce stories where elements are explicit (e.g., setting is described specifically).
- Focus on only a few important elements and introduce additional elements when the students can reliably identify those previously taught.
- Model and guide the students through stories, thinking out loud as the elements are being identified.
- Have students discuss the elements orally and compare with other stories.
- Use elements of story grammar as a structure for recalling and retelling the story. Model retelling, using the setting, characters, and important events as recall anchors. Provide picture cues to help students learn the essential elements.
- Provide plentiful opportunities to listen to and explore a variety of text forms and to engage in interactive discussion of the messages and meanings of the text. As students retell stories or answer questions about stories, they are provided with models of oral English-language conventions together with opportunities to produce complete, coherent sentences.

Writing Writing Strategies

Kindergarten students learn not only to recognize, identify, and comprehend but also to write letters, words, and beginning narratives. The connections in content between reading and writing are important in reinforcing essential skills. As students study the sound structure of language and learn how to read phonetically regular words and to write letters, they begin to use that knowledge to document their ideas in words. The National Research Council (1998) states that “at the earliest stages, writing may consist of scribbling or strings of letter-like forms. If opportunities to write are ample and well

complemented by other literacy activities and alphabetic instruction, kindergartners should be using real letters to spell out words phonetically before the school year is out (Moats, 2000). The practice of encouraging children to write and spell words as they sound (sometimes called temporary spelling) has been shown to hasten refinement of children's phonemic awareness and to accelerate their acquisition of conventional spelling when it is taught in first grade and up."

Listening and Speaking Listening and Speaking Strategies; Speaking Applications

Kindergarten instruction focuses on the development of receptive and expressive language. Initially, preschool students learn to process and retain sentence-level instructions. Eventually, they begin to use their knowledge of sentence structure to produce their own clear, coherent sentences. To do so, the students must have models of such sentences and opportunities to produce them. For some, instruction begins first with statement repetition and progresses to statement production. Instruction in this focus area must be carefully organized to include:

1. Explicit modeling of standard English
2. Carefully constructed linguistic units that progress from short sentences to longer sentences
3. Frequent opportunities to repeat sentences
4. Additional, gentle modeling emphasizing specific elements of sentences omitted or pronounced incorrectly
5. Strategically designed instruction that shifts from statement repetition to statement production

6. Structured statement production whereby students first generate responses to questions from pictures or prompts and then generate questions or responses without prompts

Kindergarten students expand their speaking skills by reciting poems, rhymes, and songs. They make brief oral presentations about familiar experiences or interests and learn to describe people, places, things, location, size, color, shape, and action.

Content and Instructional Connections

The following activities integrate standards across domains, strands, and academic disciplines. Teachers may wish to:

1. Read aloud and discuss quality literature to extend students' oral vocabulary, concepts about print, and understanding of characters, settings, and important events.
2. Begin letter-sound instruction when students demonstrate some phonemic awareness. Then incorporate instruction in letter sounds and simple decoding to help phonemic awareness develop further.
3. Use only previously taught letters and letter-sound associations to spell words.
4. Use words students can read in writing activities.
5. Incorporate words from vocabulary instruction throughout the day and across subject disciplines.
6. Provide multiple opportunities for students to hear and practice new vocabulary.
7. Provide opportunities for students to retell stories and model retelling familiar stories, emphasizing English-language conventions.

8. Read aloud and discuss expository text consistent with the kindergarten science, mathematics, and history–social science standards.

Please see Appendix B for examples of standards that span domains and strands.

Kindergarten Curricular and Instructional Profile

Reading Standard 1.14

Domain

Reading

Strand

1.0 Word analysis, fluency, and systematic vocabulary development

Substrand

Decoding and word recognition

Standard

1.14 Match all consonant and short-vowel sounds to appropriate letters

Prerequisite or corequisite standards. Kindergarten Word Analysis, Fluency, and Systematic Vocabulary Development Standards 1.6, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9.

Standard 1.6: Recognize and name all uppercase and lowercase letters.

Standard 1.7: Track and represent the number, sameness or difference, and order of two and three isolated phonemes.

Standard 1.8: Track and represent changes in simple syllables and words with two and three sounds.

Standard 1.9: Blend vowel-consonant sounds orally to make words or syllables.

Curricular and Instructional Decisions

Instructional Objectives

1. Determine whether letters and letter sounds will be introduced simultaneously or separately. This consideration is extremely critical for students who have difficulty acquiring and retaining information.
2. Define the task for learners. *Match* implies that students produce the sound in response to a letter.
3. Determine when each letter-sound correspondence will be learned. To enable students to accomplish Reading Standard 1.15 (Read simple one-syllable and high-frequency words; i.e., sight words), the teacher must introduce more than just one letter-sound per week.

Instructional Design

1. Schedule the introduction of letter sounds to optimize learning.
2. Separate easily confused letters and sounds.
3. Introduce early in the sequence those letter sounds that occur in a large number of words.
4. Introduce early those letter sounds that relate to letter names (e.g., /s/, /r/, /m/) to facilitate learning.
5. Include a few short vowels early to allow students to build words easily.
6. Use several continuous sounds early that can be stretched (e.g., /m/, /n/, /s/) rather than stop or abrupt sounds (e.g., /t/, /b/, /d/) because continuous sounds facilitate blending.
7. Review letter sounds cumulatively to promote retention.

8. Determine whether students can handle uppercase and lowercase letters simultaneously. If so, introduce those letters in which uppercase and lowercase are similar (e.g., *S s, P p, C c*) before ones that are different (e.g., *D d*). For dissimilar letters withhold introducing the uppercase letter until later in the sequence.
9. Teach students to use letter sounds in simple word reading as soon as they have a group of letter sounds (four to six) from which to build words.
10. Include a phonemic awareness objective and parallel instruction focused on the phoneme level (e.g., Reading Standards 1.7, 1.8, 1.9).
11. Introduce simple word reading (e.g., vowel-consonant, as in *an,* or consonant-vowel-consonant, as in *sat*) once students have mastered a small number of letter-sound correspondences contained in those words.

Instructional Delivery

1. Model the process of producing the sound and matching it with the letter. *Ensure that sounds are correctly pronounced* and not turned into nonexistent syllables (not *muh* but *mmm*).
2. Use and allow students to use a variety of media (chalkboard, magnetic letters, magic slates, and sounds written on chart paper) to reinforce letter-sound practice.
3. Divide instruction into (a) new letter-sound instruction; and (b) discrimination practice in which previously introduced letter-sounds are reviewed and distinguished from the newly introduced sound. If students do not know the sound, model the sound, provide an opportunity for them to identify or match the sound, and return to the letter sound later in the lesson to reinforce and review.
4. Teach letter sounds explicitly, using a *teacher model, guided practice, and independent practice sequence.*

5. Provide frequent, short periods of instruction and practice during the day.
6. Relate letter-sound instruction to the standard of hearing sounds in words (phonemic awareness). Discuss the connection of hearing sounds (aural) and mapping those sounds to print (alphabetic).

Assessment

Entry-Level Assessment

1. *Entry-Level Assessment for Instructional Planning*
   a. Before instruction assess student knowledge by showing an array of all the letters ordered randomly on a page. An alternative is to order the letter sounds in the sequence to be introduced in the instruction.
      The font should be large enough that the letters can be easily distinguished. Model the task on a couple of letter sounds. Show a row or column of letters and ask the child to tell you the sound of the letter. If the child tells you the name, say, “That’s the name of the letter. Can you tell me the sound it makes?” Continue until the student has completed the task or you have sufficient information about the student’s knowledge of letter sounds. If the student misses five consecutive sounds, stop testing.
   b. This stage of assessment is important because it provides direct information for instruction. Examine the letter-sound profiles of students in the class to determine whether consistent errors on specific letter-sound correspondences are evident.
   c. Determine whether you are assessing for accuracy or for fluency. Accuracy measures simply document whether letter sounds are identified correctly or incorrectly.

An alternative measurement procedure is to assess for fluency of letter-sound knowledge. Provide the student a page of letter-sound correspondences arranged in rows in random order on the page. Ask the student to say the sound for each letter on the page. Allow one minute for the exercise. Record the letter-sound correspondences correctly identified and those in error. Subtract the errors from the total. The resulting score will be the number of letter sounds per minute. This method allows you to monitor student growth over time by periodically administering one-minute assessments of letter-sound fluency.

d. Knowledge of letter-sound correspondence is an important indicator for establishing flexible skill-based instructional groups. Review the class profile to determine which students have considerable knowledge, moderate knowledge, or limited knowledge. Design flexible groupings to accommodate instruction to the learners' entry performance level.

Monitoring Student Progress

2. *Monitoring Student Progress Toward the Instructional Objective.* This assessment phase is designed to determine students' progress and mastery of letter-sound knowledge. The options available are:
   a. Maintaining a set of letter sounds that have been taught and assessing student performance at least biweekly to evaluate progress on those sounds. Document letter sounds students can and cannot identify.
   b. Monitoring progress toward the long-term goal of knowledge of all letter-sound correspondences. Use a format similar to the entry-level assessment and monitor progress at least once every two weeks. Document performance

(numbers of correct letter sounds and those in need of further instruction). Again, if a student makes five consecutive errors, discontinue the assessment.

Post-test Assessment

3. *Post-test Assessment Toward the Standard.* On completion of letter-sound instruction, assess student performance according to the procedures used to assess entry-level performance. The focus at this point should be on letter-sound fluency, and the goal of instruction is that students identify letter sounds accurately and automatically, enabling the students to apply letter sounds to read simple *vowel-consonant* (VC) or *consonant-vowel-consonant* (CVC) words. A target for achievement is for students to read letter-sound correspondences at a rate of one per second. Post-test assessment should include a fluency rate if it was not part of entry-level assessment.

   Note: Instruction in word reading can begin once students have learned a small number of consonants and vowels that enable them to read words.

Universal Access

Reading Difficulties or Disabilities

1. *Students with Reading Difficulties or Disabilities*
   a. Determine whether the rate of introduction is acceptable for students with special needs. If the pace is too rapid, provide additional instruction, such as an extra preteaching period (before the lesson). If students are grouped heterogeneously, the entire group is given extra scaffolded instruction. Homogeneous groups will allow the teacher to preteach only those students who need the extra help.

b. For students having difficulty in retaining letter-sound knowledge, schedule a booster session sometime during the day. Review troublesome letter sounds or newly introduced information for one to two minutes.

Advanced Learners

2. *Students Who Are Advanced Learners.* Assess students for both accuracy and fluency. Keep in mind that when many advanced learners enter kindergarten, they may be reading at three to four or more grade levels above their age peers and may not need instruction in this skill area. Suggested procedures to follow are to:
   a. Provide explicit instruction if many letter sounds are unfamiliar to students. Keep in mind that some students may acquire letter-sound knowledge very quickly. Accelerate movement through instructional materials if appropriate.
   b. Design an instructional schedule to address any unknown skills if students have mastered the majority of letter-sound correspondences.
   c. Assess higher-level reading skills if students are proficient in all letter sounds (i.e., can produce the sounds accurately and fluently). On the basis of a thorough assessment, they should be placed at an appropriate instructional level that provides academic challenge. For advanced students who have already mastered the language arts standards for kindergarten, grouping those students with first graders for language arts instruction is a simple and inexpensive way to provide the appropriate level of instruction. Their rate of learning should be subject to ongoing monitoring to ensure that they are learning at a rate commensurate with their ability.

English Learners

3. *Students Who Are English Learners.* The following suggestions assume that students will begin language arts instruction in English and that literacy instruction

will be augmented by concurrent formal linguistic instruction in English (English-language development). If language arts instruction is provided in part in a primary language, instruction in the primary language should be designed according to the same standards and principles indicated for language arts instruction in this framework. Suggested procedures to follow are to:

a. Ensure that students have had sufficient opportunities through prior activities in phonemic awareness to hear, distinguish, and produce sounds being introduced. Teachers should be aware of phonological differences between English and the students' primary language and provide additional exposure to and practice with the difficult sounds.
b. Provide students with additional systematic guidance and practice if they are unable to match all consonant and short-vowel sounds to appropriate letters.
c. Schedule additional brief practice sessions for English learners who have difficulty in learning letter-sound correspondences. They should benefit from additional review and practice of particularly difficult letter sounds.
d. Ensure that (1) students receive instruction or have had experiences (or both) with the words to be used in simple word reading; and (2) they understand the meaning of the words.
e. Encourage English learners to take home age-appropriate materials (e.g., flash cards, decodable text, handouts) related to the teaching objective.

Instructional Materials

1. Sequence the introduction of letter-sound correspondences, strategically separating easily confused sounds (e.g., /p/, /b/, /v/ and vowel sounds, especially /e/ and /i/) and introducing high-utility sounds first.

2. Scan the introduction of letter sounds for potential problems. The goal of letter-sound instruction is to provide the tools needed for word reading. Instructional texts should first introduce letter sounds in isolation. Then sounds that have been taught should be incorporated into words.
3. Include entry-level and progress-monitoring measures as well as assessments that allow teachers to identify advanced learners.
4. Ensure that similar skills (e.g., phonemic awareness and word reading) are correlated and that connections are made in instructional materials and instruction.
5. Proceed to simple instruction in word reading once students develop a set of letter sounds that allow them to read vowel-consonant or consonant-vowel-consonant words (not necessarily all sounds).

Kindergarten English–Language Arts Content Standards

Reading

1.0 Word Analysis, Fluency, and Systematic Vocabulary Development

Students know about letters, words, and sounds. They apply this knowledge to read simple sentences.

Concepts About Print

1.1 Identify the front cover, back cover, and title page of a book.

1.2 Follow words from left to right and from top to bottom on the printed page.

1.3 Understand that printed materials provide information.

1.4 Recognize that sentences in print are made up of separate words.

1.5 Distinguish letters from words.

1.6 Recognize and name all uppercase and lowercase letters of the alphabet.

Phonemic Awareness

1.7 Track (move sequentially from sound to sound) and represent the number, sameness/difference, and order of two and three isolated phonemes (e.g., */f, s, th/, /j, d, j/).*

1.8 Track (move sequentially from sound to sound) and represent changes in simple syllables and words with two and three sounds as one sound is added, substituted, omitted, shifted, or repeated (e.g., vowel-consonant, consonant-vowel, or consonant-vowel-consonant).

1.9 Blend vowel-consonant sounds orally to make words or syllables.

1.10 Identify and produce rhyming words in response to an oral prompt.

1.11 Distinguish orally stated one-syllable words and separate into beginning or ending sounds.

1.12 Track auditorily each word in a sentence and each syllable in a word.

1.13 Count the number of sounds in syllables and syllables in words.

Decoding and Word Recognition

1.14 Match all consonant and short-vowel sounds to appropriate letters.

1.15 Read simple one-syllable and high-frequency words (i.e., sight words).

1.16 Understand that as letters of words change, so do the sounds (i.e., the alphabetic principle).

Vocabulary and Concept Development

1.17 Identify and sort common words in basic categories (e.g., colors, shapes, foods).

1.18 Describe common objects and events in both general and specific language.

2.0 Reading Comprehension

Students identify the basic facts and ideas in what they have read, heard, or viewed. They use comprehension strategies (e.g., generating and responding to questions, comparing new information to what is already known). The selections in *Recommended Literature: Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve* (CDE, 2002) illustrate the quality and complexity of the materials to be read by students.

Structural Features of Informational Materials

2.1 Locate the title, table of contents, name of author, and name of illustrator.

Comprehension and Analysis of Grade-Level-Appropriate Text

2.2 Use pictures and context to make predictions about story content.

2.3 Connect to life experiences the information and events in texts.

2.4 Retell familiar stories.

2.5 Ask and answer questions about essential elements of a text.

3.0 Literary Response and Analysis

Students listen and respond to stories based on well-known characters, themes, plots, and settings. The selections in *Recommended Literature: Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve* (CDE, 2002) illustrate the quality and complexity of the materials to be read by students.

Narrative Analysis of Grade-Level-Appropriate Text

3.1 Distinguish fantasy from realistic text.

3.2 Identify types of everyday print materials (e.g., storybooks, poems, newspapers, signs, labels).

3.3 Identify characters, settings, and important events.

Writing

1.0 Writing Strategies

Students write words and brief sentences that are legible.

Organization and Focus

1.1 Use letters and phonetically spelled words to write about experiences, stories, people, objects, or events.

1.2 Write consonant-vowel-consonant words (i.e., demonstrate the alphabetic principle).

1.3 Write by moving from left to right and from top to bottom.

Penmanship

1.4 Write uppercase and lowercase letters of the alphabet independently, attending to the form and proper spacing of the letters.

Written and Oral English Language Conventions

The standards for written and oral English language conventions have been placed between those for writing and for listening and speaking because these conventions are essential to both sets of skills.

1.0 Written and Oral English Language Conventions

Students write and speak with a command of standard English conventions.

Sentence Structure

1.1 Recognize and use complete, coherent sentences when speaking.

Spelling

1.2 Spell independently by using pre-phonetic knowledge, sounds of the alphabet, and knowledge of letter names.

Listening and Speaking

1.0. Listening and Speaking Strategies

Students listen and respond to oral communication. They speak in clear and coherent sentences.

Comprehension

1.1 Understand and follow one- and two-step oral directions.

1.2 Share information and ideas, speaking audibly in complete, coherent sentences.

2.0. Speaking Applications (Genres and Their Characteristics)

Students deliver brief recitations and oral presentations about familiar experiences or interests, demonstrating command of the organization and delivery strategies outlined in Listening and Speaking Standard 1.0.

Using the listening and speaking strategies of kindergarten outlined in Listening and Speaking Standard 1.0, students:

2.1 Describe people, places, things (e.g., size, color, shape), locations, and actions.

2.2 Recite short poems, rhymes, and songs.

2.3 Relate an experience or creative story in a logical sequence.

First GradeStandards and Instruction

First-grade students extend their knowledge of language arts in significant and exciting ways as they learn skills that enable them to read and write more independently. Instruction should be focused on helping students improve the skills they had begun to develop in kindergarten. An instructional priority must be that the students learn to read and exit the grade with the ability to decode and recognize increasingly complex words accurately and automatically. Moreover, they should be able to write and spell those words and use them to communicate ideas and experiences. Concurrently, students must have broad and rich experiences to expand their knowledge of vocabulary and concepts and extend their exposure and understanding of literary forms. As they write and speak, they should be able to apply the conventions and structures of sentences.

Of foremost importance is the availability of quality instructional materials that will allow students to achieve and apply different standards in the first grade. Specifically, students will need decodable texts with which to practice the decoding skills they are learning. In addition, they will need a broad array of high-quality literature and informational texts for the teacher to read to them as they develop listening comprehension skills prerequisite for reading comprehension. The separate forms of text are necessary because neither by itself is suitable or adequate to develop the full range of skills expected of first graders. Each type of text has a distinct and significant role in beginning reading instruction.

The strands to be emphasized at the first-grade level are listed on the following page under the appropriate domains.

Each of the strands is addressed separately in the following section, with the exception of the written and oral English-language conventions strand, which is integrated into appropriate sections.

Reading

1.0 Word Analysis, Fluency, and Systematic Vocabulary Development
2.0 Reading Comprehension
3.0 Literary Response and Analysis

Writing

1.0 Writing Strategies
2.0 Writing Applications (Genres and Their Characteristics)

Written and Oral English-Language Conventions

1.0 Written and Oral English-Language Conventions

Listening and Speaking

1.0 Listening and Speaking Strategies
2.0 Speaking Applications (Genres and Their Characteristics)

Reading Word Analysis, Fluency, and Systematic Vocabulary Development

Concepts About Print

First-grade students refine their understanding of the relationship between print and language and extend that understanding to more specific applications. Specifically, they should be able not only to discriminate letters from words and words from sentences but also to match a spoken word (e.g., *cat*) with a printed word. This awareness of words and their relation to speech is reinforced by instruction and practice in phonemic awareness.

First graders further their understanding of books and stories by learning the standard conventions of print, including titles and authors. Instruction in concepts about print is focused on teaching students to (1) match oral words with printed words; (2) learn the conventions of stories, books, and other forms of literature (titles, authors); and (3) discriminate letters, words, and sentences. A recommended instructional method is to teach a particular convention of print (e.g., title) as any other basic concept, using a wide range of examples. Once students learn the basic concept, it should be incorporated into a wide array of text forms and be reviewed systematically.

Phonemic Awareness

The first-grade curriculum and instruction in phonemic awareness prepare learners by making explicit the relationship between the words they hear and the phonemic structure of the language. Students must possess phonemic awareness if they are to understand the relationship between speech and print and therefore develop proficiency in reading and writing increasingly complex words and word types. Instruction in language at the phoneme level and student proficiency in that area are the hallmarks of the curriculum standards for the first grade. Through systematic instructional sequences, students should become not only phonemically aware but also phonemically proficient in identifying and producing a range of phonemic awareness skills. (*Note:* For a more complete discussion of phonemic awareness and its relation to early reading and spelling success, see the kindergarten section in this chapter.)

First-grade students should be provided with systematic and extensive instruction and practice in:

- Learning to analyze words at the phoneme level (i.e., working with individual sounds within words)
- Working with phonemes in all positions in words (initial, final, medial)
- Progressing from identifying or distinguishing the positions of sounds in words to producing the sound and adding, deleting, and changing selected sounds
- Allocating a significant amount of time to blending, segmenting, and manipulating tasks
- Working with increasingly longer words (three to four phonemes)
- Expanding beyond consonant-vowel-consonant words (e.g., *sun*) to more complex phonemic structures (consonant blends)
- Incorporating letters into phonemic awareness activities
- Aligning the words used in phonemic awareness activities with those used in reading

Instruction in phonemic awareness can span two years, kindergarten and first grade. But in this aspect of teaching as in others, the teacher must be guided by the students' developing competencies. Some students require little training in phonemic awareness; others might require quite a bit. Although early phonemic awareness is oral, the teacher must be careful not to delay in providing learning opportunities with print. Learning phonics and learning to decode and write words all help students continue to develop phonemic awareness. In addition, students who have developed or are successfully developing phonemic awareness should not have to spend an unnecessary amount of

time being instructed in such awareness. Adequate, ongoing assessment of student progress is essential.

Decoding and Word Recognition

Students who enter the first grade should possess two critical skills: (1) fundamental understanding of the phonemic structure of words; and (2) association of letters and sounds. Some students combine the two skills intuitively through alphabetic insight; that is, the process of hearing sounds in words and using the sequence of letters in words and their associated sounds to read words. A priority of the first-grade curriculum must be to ensure that all students develop alphabetic insight and extend their ability to decode words independently and read words automatically. Automaticity comes from reading many decodable texts in which most words are composed of taught letter-sound correspondences and some words are taught directly as sight words. Decodable text should be used as an intervening step between explicit skill acquisition and the student's ability to read quality trade books. It should contain the phonic elements with which students are familiar. However, the text should be unfamiliar to the student so that they are required to apply word-analysis skills and not reconstruct text they have memorized.

A review of the content standards indicates that in the first grade students progress from being able to generate the sounds for all consonants and vowels to reading compound words, words with inflectional endings, and common word families. Decoding plays an essential role in this evolution from a time when students enter with limited knowledge of how to recognize words to a time when they leave fully able to recognize unfamiliar words. Beginning decoding (or more technically, phonological recoding) is the ability to (1) read from left to right simple, new regular words; (2) generate sounds from

all the letters; and (3) blend those sounds into a recognizable word (Moats). Explicit instruction and attention to specific letters in words and repeated opportunities to practice words successfully result in automaticity—the ability to recognize a word effortlessly and rapidly. Decoding is essential to reading unfamiliar words and reading words independently and is a critical benchmark in a student's reading development.

Because the English language is alphabetic, decoding is an essential and primary means of recognizing words. English has too many words for the user to rely on memorization as a primary strategy for identifying words (Bay Area Reading Task Force, 1997). In the first grade the skills and strategies learned in decoding and word recognition are extended in the standards for writing conventions. For example, as students learn to read compound words and contractions, economy in instruction can be gained by having the students write the words and use them in speaking. Similarly, as students learn to read three- and four-letter short-vowel words and sight words, they should be given instruction and opportunities to practice spelling those words.

Decoding instruction in the first grade should:

- Progress systematically from simple word types (e.g., consonant-vowel-consonant) and word lengths (e.g., number of phonemes) and word complexity (e.g., phonemes in the word, position of blends, stop sounds) to more complex words.
- Model instruction at each of the fundamental stages (e.g., letter-sound correspondences, blending, reading whole words).
- Sequence words strategically to incorporate known letters or letter-sound combinations.
- Provide initial practice in controlled connected text in which students can apply their newly learned skills successfully.

- Include repeated opportunities to read words in contexts in which students can apply their knowledge of letter-sound correspondences.
- Use decodable text based on specific phonics lessons in the early part of the first grade as an intervening step between explicit skill acquisition and the students' ability to read quality trade books. Decodable text should contain the phonics elements and sight words that students have been taught. However, the text should be unfamiliar to students so that they are required to apply word-analysis skills and not simply reconstruct text they have memorized.
- Teach necessary sight words to make more interesting stories accessible.

First-grade instruction in word analysis should teach students high-frequency irregular words systematically. Words with high utility should be selected and used judiciously in early reading. Teachers should point out irregularities while focusing student attention on all letters in the word and should provide repeated practice. The number of irregular words introduced should be controlled so that the students will not be overwhelmed. High-frequency words (e.g., *was, saw; them, they, there*), often confused by students, should be strategically separated for initial instruction as well.

Instruction in word families and word patterns (i.e., reading orthographic units of text, such as *at, sat, fat, rat*) should begin after students have learned the letter-sound correspondences in the unit (Ehri and McCormick, 1998). Teaching students to process larger, highly represented patterns will increase fluency in word recognition. However, the instruction should be carefully coordinated and should build on knowledge gained from instruction in letter-sound correspondence.

The benchmark for facile word readers in the first grade is their ability to read aloud fluently in a manner that resembles natural speech. Although important in its own right,

fluency has significant implications for comprehension. A primary reason for its importance is that *if students are not fluent, automatic decoders, they will spend so much mental energy decoding words that they will have too little energy left for comprehension* (Stanovich, 1994). Comprehension clearly involves more than fluent word recognition but is dependent on fluent word recognition. On average, first graders increase their reading fluency approximately 2.10 correct words per minute per week (Fuchs et al., 1993). After an estimated 30 weeks of instruction, students should leave the first grade reading approximately 60 words per minute correctly. Practice in fluency is most appropriate when students are accurate word readers. One technique that has been used to increase fluency is repeated readings of the same text to develop familiarity and automaticity (National Reading Panel, 2000; Samuels, 1979).

Vocabulary and Concept Development

The curriculum and instruction offered in the first grade extend the understanding of concepts and vocabulary in English. Instruction should focus on two types of vocabulary development, basic categorization of grade-appropriate concepts (e.g., animals, foods) and the words students hear and read in stories and informational text that are instrumental to comprehension. Vocabulary development occurs through both direct instruction in specific concepts and words and through exposure to a broad and diverse range of words in stories and informational text that have been read.

In addition to learning specific vocabulary, first-grade students also learn to use context and surrounding text to understand the meaning of unknown words. They are provided instruction and opportunities that prepare them to use new and descriptive vocabulary in their speaking and writing.

Reading Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension can be developed through listening and reading. For kindergarten students and all other students whose decoding and word-recognition skills do not yet allow them access to story-level passages, systematic opportunities must be provided to listen to stories and answer comprehension questions orally. The oral readings should have more complex vocabulary, syntactic structures, and story lines than are found in the text used for decoding and word recognition (Beck, McKeown, and Kucan, 2002).

Key comprehension strategies for first graders include:

- Identifying text that uses sequence or other logical order
- Following one-step written instructions
- Responding to or posing *who, what, when, where,* and *how* questions
- Recognizing the commonalities that occur across stories and narrative text
- Using context to resolve ambiguities about the meaning of words and sentences
- Confirming predictions by identifying supporting text
- Relating prior knowledge to textual information
- Retelling the central ideas of simple expository or narrative passages

Instruction in comprehension is designed with the same precision as instruction in word recognition. For comprehension to occur, the words in the text, along with their meanings, must first be accessible to the learner. Initial reading comprehension is practiced with texts students can read at their level. When appropriate, the complexity of comprehension instruction may be simplified by allowing students to learn and practice the strategy from information presented in speech or in pictures. If the forms of presentation are not appropriate, initial instruction in comprehension can begin with

manageable textual units (e.g., sentences, short paragraphs before longer passages, and complete stories).

Additional instruction in comprehension may include:

- Modeling multiple examples and providing extensive guided practice in comprehension strategies
- Helping students recognize the features of text that facilitate comprehension
- Brainstorming central ideas from the text (e.g., What do we know about what frogs eat? What do we know about where they live? What do we know about their appearance? What else would we like to know about frogs?)

The text for initial instruction in comprehension should (1) begin with linguistic units appropriate for the learner; (2) use familiar vocabulary; (3) be based on a topic with which the learner is familiar; and (4) use simple syntactical structures. Instruction in comprehension should also require students to determine which strategy to use and why and provide extensive opportunities for students to read and apply the strategies throughout the year. For example, instruction designed to teach children to answer *who, what, when, where,* and *how* questions (Reading Comprehension Standard 2.2) would consist of determining which type of question to ask first. *Who* and *what* questions are typically easier to answer than *when* and *where* questions. For *when* and *where* questions, instruction in how to identify the when and where in text may be necessary. These examples would be presented orally because the wording may be too difficult for first graders to decode:

After the baseball game tells when.
On Saturday tells when.
On the table tells where.
In San Francisco tells where.

When students can correctly identify and discriminate between when and where, they learn to answer questions from sentences. *Example:*

Text: "Nick went home after the baseball game."

Question: "When did Nick go home?" (After the baseball game)

A simple instructional design would teach each type of question separately. After one type is clearly understood and applied (e.g., *who*), a second type (e.g., *what*) would be introduced. After both types are understood, *who* and *what* questions can be combined in an instructional session.

At the very beginning of instruction, first-grade students should be given a linguistic structure they can comprehend. Sentences are, therefore, a plausible starting point because they provide a manageable unit of language that conveys information. Once students can answer questions at the sentence level, the teacher can proceed to multiple sentences and eventually to paragraphs. Students who are more advanced can be prompted to ask and answer the questions.

Reading Literary Response and Analysis

First-grade students should extend their schema or structure of stories to the organizational structure that narrative text has a beginning, a middle, and an end. In addition, they should learn the sequence or logical order of informational text. They use those structures to comprehend text as well as retell stories. The elements of plot are added to the previously taught setting, characters, and important events. For a description of instructional design for elements of story grammar, see the kindergarten section in this chapter.

The importance of understanding the structures of text is reflected in the number of related standards. For Literary Response and Analysis Standard 3.1, for example,

students read about and learn the elements of stories. They also learn that stories have a beginning, middle, and end. These structures are directly connected to Writing Application Standard 2.1, for which students write brief narratives describing an experience. Further related is Speaking Application Standard 2.2, the objective of which is for students to retell stories, using basic story grammar elements.

Content standards in mathematics, history–social science, and science can be addressed simultaneously as students read (or have read to them) stories or expository text that develop concepts and vocabulary in those academic areas. Economic, effective curricular programs and instruction will draw upon those relationships to expedite and reinforce language arts learning across the curriculum.

Strategies recommended in teaching organizational sequences of text (informational or narrative) are:

- Ensuring that students have a conceptual understanding of beginning, middle, and end
- Introducing text where the components of text are explicit (beginning, middle, and end being obvious)
- Beginning with short passages to reduce the memory load for learners
- Focusing on only one component at a time (e.g., beginning)
- Introducing an additional component when students can reliably identify those previously taught
- Guiding students through sample text in which teachers think out loud as they identify the components
- Having students discuss the elements orally and make comparisons with other stories

- Using the beginning, middle, and end as a structure for recalling and retelling the story or information

Writing Writing Strategies and Writing Applications

First-grade writing combines the important skills of idea formation and documentation, penmanship, and spelling. Spelling assumes increased importance as students are responsible for communicating their ideas through recognized conventions. At this stage spelling instruction takes three forms. Students should be taught explicitly how to use their knowledge of the phonemic structure of words and letter-sound correspondences to spell *the words they do not know*. As students begin to read words, they should be taught to spell *the words they can read*. In addition, students need to learn to spell *high-frequency words* correctly. The ability to use phonetic spelling, although temporary, indicates that children "have achieved an essential milestone toward mastery of decoding in reading" (Moats, 2000, 1995).

Moats reports that although some students easily learn to spell correctly, many others do not. Guidelines for instruction in spelling for students who do not easily learn to spell correctly include:

1. Systematic, teacher-directed instruction and practice with controlled amounts of new information
2. Regulation of the amount of information presented at one time (Introduce smaller sets of words as opposed to entire lists at one time.)
3. Plentiful opportunities to practice newly introduced spellings
4. Presentation of only one spelling rule or generalization at a time
5. Provision of immediate corrective feedback

6. Organized, sequential instruction that builds on phonological awareness and letter-sound correspondences and regular one-syllable patterns.

Students in the first grade are introduced to writing as a means of communicating. They begin to understand that writing is a process and learn to apply the process appropriately to write brief narratives and brief descriptions of objects, persons, places, or events. As students learn to apply process writing to narrative and descriptive structures, they also learn the different types of sentences along with the conventions for recording their ideas (e.g., capitalization, punctuation). They learn to apply writing conventions, with particular emphasis being placed on the fundamentals of grammar, punctuation, and capitalization.

General guidelines for writing instruction include:

1. Selecting and emphasizing those sentence types most useful for communicating ideas
2. Focusing on one form of punctuation until learners achieve mastery and then introducing a second form
3. Sequencing student writing activities so that they first see good models, edit other writing, and then generate their own sentences or text

As students learn the various stages of writing as a process (prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing), they should have a structure for incorporating varying combinations of the stages into their writing that is based on the purpose of a specific piece of writing. Using a story grammar structure or a simple structure for descriptive text helps students apply the stages of writing.

Listening and Speaking Listening and Speaking Strategies and Speaking Applications

First-grade students are increasingly responsible for comprehending information presented orally, communicating their ideas through speaking and writing, recalling important information from narratives and informational text, and answering questions. Their responses should incorporate greater diversity into the words they use and greater mastery of grammatical structures. To respond to or produce complete, coherent sentences that use descriptive words or correct singular and plural nouns, students need models of those structures along with many opportunities to produce their own sentences.

Instructional considerations to improve sentence production include:

1. Providing explicit models
2. Eliciting student responses that progress from identification to production
3. Carefully selecting, sequencing, and scheduling instructional targets that allow learners to master one form (e.g., *my*) before progressing to the next (e.g., *his/her* or *your/yours*)
4. Providing frequent opportunities to repeat sentences
5. Strategically integrating instruction requiring students to discern the correct usage (e.g., *his/her, your/yours*)

In addition to learning sentence-level standards for listening and speaking, students should learn to comprehend and reconstruct sequences of information, including multiple-step directions, poems, songs, and stories. Incremental instruction in which students are taught to recall increasingly longer units should build on the sentence-level guidelines previously outlined.

Content and Instructional Connections

The following activities integrate standards across domains, strands, and academic disciplines. Teachers may wish to:

1. Use known letters, phonemic awareness, letter-sound associations, and encoding skills to read, write, and spell words.
2. Reinforce the connections between phonemic awareness, translating a printed word into its letter-sound correspondences, reading the whole word, and spelling. Use words that students can read in spelling and writing activities.
3. Introduce words from stories in various instructional activities. Provide frequent opportunities for students to hear and practice new vocabulary.
4. Provide ample opportunities for students to hear stories read aloud and then discuss those stories.
5. Provide opportunities for students to retell stories based on their knowledge of story elements. Model how to retell familiar stories, emphasizing coherent English-language conventions.
6. Use the story grammar structure to comprehend, retell, and compose stories.
7. Have students read (and read to them) stories and informational text that address the first-grade content standards in mathematics, science, and history–social science.

Please see Appendix B for examples of standards that span domains and strands.

First GradeCurricular and Instructional Profile

Reading Standard 1.10

DOMAIN

Reading

STRAND

1.0 Word analysis, fluency, and systematic vocabulary development

SUBSTRAND

Decoding and word recognition

STANDARD

1.10 Generate the sounds from all the letters and letter patterns, including consonant blends and long- and short-vowel patterns (i.e., phonograms), and blend those sounds into recognizable words.

Prerequisite standard. Kindergarten Word Analysis, Fluency, and Systematic Vocabulary Development Standard 1.14: Match all consonant and short-vowel sounds to appropriate letters.

Prerequisite or corequisite standards. First-Grade Word Analysis, Fluency, and Systematic Vocabulary Development Standards 1.8, 1.9.

Standard 1.8: Blend two to four phonemes into recognizable words.

Standard 1.9: Segment single-syllable words into their components.

Corequisite standard. First-Grade Written and Oral English-Language Conventions Standard 1.8: Spell three- and four-letter short-vowel words and grade-level-appropriate sight words correctly.

Curricular and Instructional Decisions

Instructional Objectives

1. The standard addressing the year-end goal of being able to blend all letters and letter patterns into words involves a minimum of three skills:
   a. Knowledge of some letter-sound correspondences
   b. Ability orally to blend and segment words of three to four phonemes
   c. Ability to blend letter-sound correspondences taken from written words

   Assessment, instruction, and practice should address each of the components.
2. Before teaching students to recognize the sounds associated with each letter and blend those sounds into a word, determine whether students have the prerequisite skills (see 1a and 1b). Students do not have to know all the letter sounds before initiating blending and word reading. However, to satisfy the prerequisite for this standard, they must know some letter sounds and be able to blend and segment words auditorily.
3. Blending is a focused and distributed instructional priority. That is, during initial instruction there is an intense focus on this strategy. Teachers provide extensive instruction (delivered in short increments) and practice in learning to blend easy word types. Instruction and practice in blending must be reintroduced when new word types are introduced. Although this instructional period may be brief, students must understand that blending is used not only with short words (e.g., *sun*) but with longer words as well (e.g., *splash*).

Instructional Design

Successful word reading depends largely on:

1. Systematic selection and sequencing of letters in the words to maximize students' ability to blend
2. Progression of word difficulty based on length and configuration of consonants and vowels within the word
3. Explicit instruction and modeling in how to blend letter sounds into words
4. Sufficient practice in transitioning from reading each letter sound at a time to reading the whole word
5. Explicit instruction in how to "sound out words in your head"

Systematic Selection and Sequencing of Letters in Words

Letter sounds in words have properties that can enhance or impede blending and word reading. For initial instruction in blending, the letters in words should be:

- Continuous sounds because they can be prolonged or stretched (e.g., /m/, /s/)
- Letters students know
- Used in a large number of words for high utility
- Lowercase unless the uppercase and lowercase letters have highly similar shapes (e.g., *S s; V v*)

Note: Visually and auditorily similar (e.g., /*b*/ and /*d*/) letter sounds should not be in the same initial blending activities.

Progression of Word Difficulty Based on Length and Configuration of Consonants and Vowels Within the Word

Words used in blending instruction and practice should:

- Progress from the short vowel-consonant and consonant-vowel-consonant (two- or three-letter words in which letters represent their most common sounds) to longer words (four- or five-phoneme words in which letters represent their most common sounds).
- Reserve consonant blends (e.g., /*st*/, /*tr*/, /*pl*/) until the students are proficient in working with consonant-vowel-consonant configurations.
- Begin with continuous sounds in early exercises to facilitate blending. Stop sounds (sounds that cannot be prolonged in the breath stream, such as /t/, /p/, and /ck/) may be used in the final positions of words.
- Represent vocabulary and concepts with which students are familiar.

Progression from Oral Blending to Oral Whole-Word Reading to "Sounding It Out in Your Head"

- Orally blending the letter-sound associations of a word is a first step in word reading. In this process students produce each sound orally and sustain that sound as they progress to the next. This process focuses student attention on the individual letters in the word and on their importance.
- Once proficient in blending the individual sounds orally, students are taught to put those sounds together into a whole word. This important step must be modeled and practiced.
- The final step in this sequence involves students sounding out the letter-sound correspondences "in their head" or silently producing the whole word.

This systematic progression is important because it makes public the necessary steps involved in reading a whole word.

Instructional Delivery

Orally Blending Individual Letter Sounds

1. Model the process of blending the sounds in the word ("I'll read this word, blending the sounds *mmmmmmmmaaaaaaannnnnn")*. Do not stop between the sounds. Make certain that the sounds are not distorted as you stretch them out. You may want to use language that helps make the process more vivid (stretching out the sounds, keeping the sounds going).
2. Use your finger or hand to track under each letter as you say each individual sound.
3. Hold each sound long enough for the students to hear it individually. Stop sounds cannot be prolonged without distortion. When introducing words that begin with stop sounds (such as *t, k,* and *p*), teach the students that those sounds should be pronounced quickly and should not be stretched out.
4. Use an explicit teaching sequence in which you model examples first and then have the students blend the words with you. Finally, the students should blend the words on their own.
5. Include a sufficient number of examples to assess students' proficiency. This instructional segment should be relatively brief (five to ten minutes) in the daily language arts lesson.

Producing the Whole Word

1. Introduce the whole-word step in which students say the word at a regular pace once they can blend the sounds in the word.

2. Provide sufficient time for students to put the sounds together. The sequence involves orally blending the individual letter sounds in the word and then saying the whole word.

Internalizing the Blending Process

1. In the final step of the blending process, students sound out the word to themselves and then produce the whole word.
2. Two important dimensions of this phase are:
   a. Showing students how to internalize
   b. Providing sufficient time for all students to blend the word in their head and say the word
3. On average, students should be able to blend sounds and retrieve a word at a rate of a maximum of one second per letter sound in the word. If they require more time, they may not have mastered the prerequisite skills.

Because blending is now an overt process, teachers must use strategies to show students the transition steps. Teachers might wish to model how to trace a finger under each sound, subvocalizing the sounds of the word.

General Design

1. Provide frequent, short periods of instruction and practice on blending. Examples should include newly introduced letter sounds and newly introduced word types—consonant-vowel-consonant-consonant (e.g., *rest*).
2. Relate blending instruction to spelling when students master blending and reading words at a regular rate. Teaching students the relationship between reading and spelling strengthens alphabetic understanding and the connections between reading and writing.

Assessment

Entry-Level Assessment

1. *Entry-Level Assessment for Instructional Planning*
    a. Assess student knowledge of letter sounds to identify letter sounds to use in initial blending and word-reading instruction. Students should be fluent in some letter-sound correspondences prior to beginning word-reading instruction.
    b. Assess students' phonemic blending ability (e.g., the ability to blend three to four phonemes into a word).
    c. Determine whether students can read words in lists of word types or in passages containing high percentages of words that are phonetically regular. Identify word types (length and consonant-vowel configuration) that students can read and begin instruction at that point.
    d. Use nonsense words or pseudo words as measures to assess blending ability. Nonsense words are phonetically regular but have no commonly recognized meaning (e.g., *rin, sep, tist*). With nonsense words you can determine students' knowledge of individual letter-sound correspondences and blending ability.
    e. Most first graders will have a limited repertoire of words they can read depending on the kindergarten instruction they have received. Many students may have a core of sight words they can identify and may look like readers. However, they may not have adequate decoding skills.

Monitoring Student Progress

2. *Monitoring Student Progress Toward the Instructional Objective*

a. This assessment phase is designed to determine students' progress and mastery of letter-sound knowledge. The options available are:
   - Maintaining a set of taught letter sounds and word types. To evaluate progress, assess student performance at least once every two weeks on words containing familiar letter sounds. Record performance and document particular letter sounds or blending patterns with which they have difficulty (e.g., stopping between sounds; not being able to read whole words).
   - Monitoring progress toward the long-term goal with a list of words selected randomly from the first-grade curriculum. Although all word types will have been introduced during the early months of the academic year, this measure provides a common measure by which to evaluate students' change in word-reading ability over time.

b. Once students are reading individual words at a rate of one word per three seconds or less, introduce connected text as an assessment tool.

Post-test Assessment

3. *Post-test Assessment Toward the Standard*

a. Blending is a temporary and distributed instructional priority. Students may be able to blend some word types but not others. Therefore, there may be ongoing post-tests depending on the word type being studied.

b. Post-tests should be distributed throughout the year. To assess overall growth, administer a test that measures fluency through the use of a nonsense-word measure to determine entry-level skills. Or have the students read a passage that represents the range of word types and blending requirements for the year.

Universal Access

Reading Difficulties or Disabilities

1. *Students with Reading Difficulties or Disabilities*
    a. These students need a firm understanding of prerequisite skills before beginning blending. If they cannot blend sounds auditorily or know only a few letter-sound correspondences, provide appropriate instruction before introducing blending.
    b. Some first graders will continue to stop between the sounds in a word. Provide extra models of not stopping between the sounds and provide sufficient waiting time for students to process the sounds into the whole word.
    c. Assess whether the rate of introduction of new letter sounds into blending or new word types is manageable for students with special needs. If the pace is too rapid, provide additional instruction.
    d. If students have difficulty in retaining the blending strategy, schedule a booster session sometime during the day for one to two minutes.

Advanced Learners

2. *Students Who Are Advanced Learners*
    a. Use entry-level assessment to determine the need for instruction in blending. Keep in mind that some students may have memorized a large repertoire of words but still lack blending strategies. Use the nonsense words measure to assess their ability.
    b. Determine the word type(s) for which students need instruction. They may learn the blending strategy and immediately generalize to more complex word types, making further or extensive instruction in blending unnecessary.

c. If isolated word types are unfamiliar to students, design an instructional schedule to address the missing skills. If the students are proficient in decoding phonetically regular words, proceed to introductory passage-reading standards.

d. Provide explicit instruction in targeted skill areas, keeping in mind that the students may acquire the blending strategy very quickly. Accelerate movement through instructional objectives.

e. If the students can demonstrate mastery of the grade-level standards, consider grouping the students within or across grade levels to work on the second-grade standards.

Because many advanced learners enter the first grade reading well above grade level, the teacher should determine their overall reading ability in addition to their performance in specific skill areas. On the basis of a comprehensive assessment, give students challenging instructional materials and monitor their progress carefully to ensure they are learning at a rate commensurate with their abilities.

Note: Unnecessary drill and practice in areas of high performance can be very discouraging for advanced learners because they are being asked to learn something they already know.

English Learners

3. Students Who Are English Learners

The following suggestions assume that students will begin language arts instruction in English and that literacy instruction is augmented by concurrent formal linguistic instruction in English (English-language development). If instruction is provided in part in the primary language and that language is alphabetic, the instruction in the primary language should be designed according

to the same standards and principles established for language arts instruction in this framework. It is suggested, therefore, that the teacher:

a. Reassess the students' knowledge of letter-sound correspondences and phonological awareness of the sounds included in the lesson before teaching English learners to blend sounds. Additional phonological and letter-sound instruction should be provided as needed. Teachers should be aware of phonological differences between English and the students' primary languages and provide additional exposure to and practice with difficult sounds.

b. Provide additional modeling and practice for those English learners who need further assistance. Appropriate modeling can by provided by the teacher or by native English-speaking peers. Be sure to provide sufficient waiting time to process and produce sounds.

c. Assess whether the rate of instruction of new letter sounds into blending or of new word types is manageable. If not manageable for some students, determine a way to provide additional systematic, guided instruction so that they will be able to catch up with their classmates and accomplish the lesson objective.

d. Ensure that students have had previous instruction or experiences (or both) with the words included in the instruction and that they understand their meaning.

e. Assess what knowledge is assumed before each unit of instruction. That is, determine what knowledge the typical English speaker already brings to the classroom and provide preteaching of key concepts.

f. Have English learners who have acquired literacy skills in their first language draw on those skills in English. Teachers can build on the knowledge of

reading skills that students have acquired in their first languages when teaching English letter-sound correspondences.

g. Provide English learners with explicit models of the letter-sound correspondences that students are expected to know and correct errors as would be done for other learners. Correction of errors should always be conducted in a way that encourages students to keep trying and helps them see the progress they are making.

Instructional Materials

1. Texts should contain explicit instruction in the blending process as well as in the transition from blending to the reading of whole words.
2. The letter-sound correspondences included in the words and the word types should be carefully selected.
3. Measures for assessing entry level and progress throughout instruction should be included in curricular materials.
4. Related skills (e.g., phonemic awareness, spelling) should be correlated, and connections should be made in instructional materials and instruction.
5. Decodable texts should be provided as an intervening step between explicit skill acquisition and the student's ability to read quality trade books. Decodable texts should contain the phonics elements with which students are familiar. However, the text should be unfamiliar to the student because the student should apply word-analysis skills, not reconstruct text already memorized.

First Grade English–Language Arts Content Standards

Reading

1.0 Word Analysis, Fluency, and Systematic Vocabulary Development

Students understand the basic features of reading. They select letter patterns and know how to translate them into spoken language by using phonics, syllabication, and word parts. They apply this knowledge to achieve fluent oral and silent reading.

Concepts About Print

1.1 Match oral words to printed words.

1.2 Identify the title and author of a reading selection.

1.3 Identify letters, words, and sentences.

Phonemic Awareness

1.4 Distinguish initial, medial, and final sounds in single-syllable words.

1.5 Distinguish long- and short-vowel sounds in orally stated single-syllable words (e.g., bit/bite).

1.6 Create and state a series of rhyming words, including consonant blends.

1.7 Add, delete, or change target sounds to change words (e.g., change cow to how; pan to an).

1.8 Blend two to four phonemes into recognizable words (e.g., /c/a/t/ = cat; /f/l/a/t/ = flat).

1.9 Segment single syllable words into their components (e.g., /c/a/t/ = cat; /s/p/l/a/t/ =splat; /r/i/*ch*/ = rich).

Decoding and Word Recognition

1.10 Generate the sounds from all the letters and letter patterns, including consonant blends and long- and short-vowel patterns (i.e., phonograms), and blend those sounds into recognizable words.

1.11 Read common, irregular sight words (e.g., *the, have, said, come, give, of*).

1.12 Use knowledge of vowel digraphs and r-controlled letter-sound associations to read words.

1.13 Read compound words and contractions.

1.14 Read inflectional forms (e.g., *-s, -ed, -ing*) and root words (e.g., *look, looked, looking*).

1.15 Read common word families (e.g., *-ite, -ate*).

1.16 Read aloud with fluency in a manner that sounds like natural speech.

Vocabulary and Concept Development

1.17 Classify grade-appropriate categories of words (e.g., concrete collections of animals, foods, toys).

2.0 Reading Comprehension

Students read and understand grade-level-appropriate material. They draw upon a variety of comprehension strategies as needed (e.g., generating and responding to essential questions, making predictions, comparing information from several sources). The selections in *Recommended Literature: Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve* (CDE, 2002) illustrate the quality and complexity of the materials to be read by students. In addition to their regular school reading, by grade four, students read one-half million words annually, including a good representation of grade-level-appropriate narrative and expository text

(e.g., classic and contemporary literature, magazines, newspapers, online information). In grade one, students begin to make progress toward this goal.

Structural Features of Informational Materials

2.1 Identify text that uses sequence or other logical order.

Comprehension and Analysis of Grade-Level-Appropriate Text

2.2 Respond to *who, what, when, where,* and *how* questions.

2.3 Follow one-step written instructions.

2.4 Use context to resolve ambiguities about word and sentence meanings.

2.5 Confirm predictions about what will happen next in a text by identifying key words (i.e., signpost words).

2.6 Relate prior knowledge to textual information.

2.7 Retell the central ideas of simple expository or narrative passages.

3.0 Literary Response and Analysis

Students read and respond to a wide variety of significant works of children's literature. They distinguish between the structural features of the text and the literary terms or elements (e.g., theme, plot, setting, characters). The selections in *Recommended Literature: Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve* (CDE, 2002) illustrate the quality and complexity of the materials to be read by students.

Narrative Analysis of Grade-Level-Appropriate Text

3.1 Identify and describe the elements of plot, setting, and character(s) in a story, as well as the story's beginning, middle, and ending.

3.2 Describe the roles of authors and illustrators and their contributions to print materials.

3.3 Recollect, talk, and write about books read during the school year.

Writing

1.0 Writing Strategies

Students write clear and coherent sentences and paragraphs that develop a central idea. Their writing shows they consider the audience and purpose. Students progress through the stages of the writing process (e.g., prewriting, drafting, revising, editing successive versions).

Organization and Focus

1.1 Select a focus when writing.

1.2 Use descriptive words when writing.

Penmanship

1.3 Print legibly and space letters, words, and sentences appropriately.

2.0 Writing Applications (Genres and Their Characteristics)

Students write compositions that describe and explain familiar objects, events, and experiences. Student writing demonstrates a command of standard American English and the drafting, research, and organizational strategies outlined in Writing Standard 1.0.

Using the writing strategies of grade one outlined in Writing Standard 1.0, students:

2.1 Write brief narratives (e.g., fictional, autobiographical) describing an experience.

2.2 Write brief expository descriptions of a real object, person, place, or event, using sensory details.

Written and Oral English Language Conventions

The standards for written and oral English language conventions have been placed between those for writing and for listening and speaking because these conventions are essential to both sets of skills.

1.0 Written and Oral English Language Conventions

Students write and speak with a command of standard English conventions appropriate to this grade level.

Sentence Structure

1.1 Write and speak in complete, coherent sentences.

Grammar

1.2 Identify and correctly use singular and plural nouns.

1.3 Identify and correctly use contractions (e.g., *isn't, aren't, can't, won't*) and singular possessive pronouns (e.g., *my/mine, his/her, hers, your/s*) in writing and speaking.

Punctuation

1.4 Distinguish between declarative, exclamatory, and interrogative sentences.

1.5 Use a period, exclamation point, or question mark at the end of sentences.

1.6 Use knowledge of the basic rules of punctuation and capitalization when writing.

Capitalization

1.7 Capitalize the first word of a sentence, names of people, and the pronoun *I.*

Spelling

1.8 Spell three- and four-letter short-vowel words and grade-level-appropriate sight words correctly.

Listening and Speaking

1.0 Listening and Speaking Strategies

Students listen critically and respond appropriately to oral communication. They speak in a manner that guides the listener to understand important ideas by using proper phrasing, pitch, and modulation.

Comprehension

1.1 Listen attentively.

1.2 Ask questions for clarification and understanding.

1.3 Give, restate, and follow simple two-step directions.

Organization and Delivery of Oral Communication

1.4 Stay on the topic when speaking.

1.5 Use descriptive words when speaking about people, places, things, and events.

2.0 Speaking Applications (Genres and Their Characteristics)

Students deliver brief recitations and oral presentations about familiar experiences or interests that are organized around a coherent thesis statement. Student speaking demonstrates a command of standard American English and the organizational and delivery strategies outlined in Listening and Speaking Standard 1.0.

Using the speaking strategies of grade one outlined in Listening and Speaking Standard 1.0, students:

2.1 Recite poems, rhymes, songs, and stories.

2.2 Retell stories using basic story grammar and relating the sequence of story events by answering *who, what, when, where, why,* and *how* questions.

2.3 Relate an important life event or personal experience in a simple sequence.

2.4 Provide descriptions with careful attention to sensory detail.

Second Grade Standards and Instruction

Before they enter the second grade, most students have already learned the foundational skills of word analysis and have a rudimentary understanding of the elements of narrative text. They are able to spell three- and four-letter short vowel words and some common sight words (e.g., *the, have, said, come, give, of*). In addition, they possess basic skills in penmanship and in the use of writing to communicate knowledge and ideas. In the second grade the language arts curriculum and instruction are focused on enhancing word-recognition fluency, extending understanding of dimensions of narrative and informational text, and increasing proficiency in written and oral communication.

The second-grade curriculum and instruction should emphasize increasing students' facility with the alphabetic writing system and with larger and more complex units of text and on applying knowledge of letter-sound correspondences to decode unfamiliar words. Further efforts should be made to help students link phonemic awareness of words and knowledge of letter-sounds to build lexicons of familiar words; use knowledge of spelling patterns, prefixes, and suffixes; and increase sight vocabulary through extensive practice. Adequate initial reading instruction requires that students use reading to obtain meaning from print and have frequent opportunities to read.

They should extend their repertoire of reading-comprehension strategies for both narrative and informational text with instructional adjuncts (e.g., graphs, diagrams) and more sophisticated techniques for analyzing text (e.g., comparison and contrast). Initial skill in editing and revising text must be developed at this grade level, and increased emphasis should be placed on legible and coherent writing. Students should continue to work on written and oral English-language conventions as they develop their awareness

of the parts of speech and the correct spelling of more complex word types. Listening comprehension and speaking expectations increase as second graders learn to paraphrase, clarify, explain, and report on information they hear, experience, and read.

The strands to be emphasized in the second grade are listed on the following page under the appropriate domains.

Each of the strands is addressed separately with the exception of the written and oral English-language conventions strand, which is integrated within appropriate sections.

Reading
1.0 Word Analysis, Fluency, and Systematic Vocabulary Development
2.0 Reading Comprehension
3.0 Literary Response and Analysis

Writing
1.0 Writing Strategies
2.0 Writing Applications (Genres and Their Characteristics)

Written and Oral English-Language Conventions
1.0 Written and Oral English-Language Conventions

Listening and Speaking
1.0 Listening and Speaking Strategies
2.0 Speaking Applications (Genres and Their Characteristics)

Reading Word Analysis, Fluency, and Systematic Vocabulary Development

Decoding and Word Recognition

At the *beginning* of the second grade, students should be able to (1) generate the sounds for all consonants, consonant blends, and long and short vowels; (2) recognize common sight words; and (3) process word families and inflectional endings of words.

Development of word-analysis and word-recognition skills in the second grade proceeds systematically, building on first-grade skills and extending those fundamental understandings purposefully and interdependently. Instruction should carefully

sequence the introduction of new skills and strategies. If students lack proficiency in prerequisite skills, those skills must be taught before more advanced word structures are presented.

Early in the second grade, decoding operations are mechanical and not automatic for many learners. During this year students typically make great strides in decoding fluency (Ehri and McCormick, 1998). Over the course of the year, they develop fluency through instruction in advanced phonics units (e.g., vowel diphthongs) and in the use of larger orthographic units of text, such as onset and rime. (Onset is the consonant or consonants that come before the first vowel; rime is the remainder of the word beginning with the first vowel [e.g., *h-ill, p-ill*] to read words.) Redundancy in letter sounds and orthographic units in words allows students to process words more efficiently. They learn to read phonetically regular words more fluently as they become familiar and facile with chunks of text. *Note*: Students have not merely memorized the larger units but, when necessary, can apply their knowledge of letter-sound correspondences to work their way through the words.

Students in the second grade should also continue instruction and practice in learning reliable rules to assist in decoding. For example, learning that an *e* at the end of a word usually causes the medial vowel to be long (or say its name) is a rule that advances word-analysis skills. A primary goal of second-grade word-analysis instruction is to increase systematically students' ability to read words because of their knowledge of more complex spelling patterns.

Another essential component of fluency development is the opportunity for students to practice unfamiliar words many times in text, allowing them to use their decoding

skills with a high degree of success. Text that students practice should be at their instructional level, with no more than one in ten words read inaccurately.

Advanced instruction in decoding is more effective if it relies on the following principles of design and delivery. Suggested procedures to follow are to:

- Teach the advanced phonic-analysis skills as explicitly as was done for the earlier letter-sound correspondences: first in isolation, then in words and connected text, and, when the students become proficient, in trade books.
- Avoid assuming that learners will automatically transfer skills from one word type to another. When introducing a new letter combination, prefix, or word ending, model each of the fundamental stages (e.g., letter-combination, prefixes), blending the word and then reading the whole word.
- Separate auditorily and visually similar letter combinations in the instructional sequence (e.g., do not introduce both sounds for *oo* simultaneously; separate *ai, au*).
- Sequence words and sentences strategically to incorporate known phonics units (e.g., letter combinations, inflectional endings).
- Ensure that students know the sounds of the individual letters prior to introducing larger orthographic units (e.g., *ill, ap, ing*).
- Provide initial practice in controlled contexts in which students can apply newly learned skills successfully.
- Offer repeated opportunities for students to read words in contexts where they can apply their advanced phonics skills with a high level of success.
- Use decodable text, if needed, as an intervening step between explicit skill acquisition and the student's ability to read quality trade books.

- Incorporate spelling to reinforce word analysis. After students can read words, provide explicit instruction in spelling, showing students how to map the sounds of letters onto print.
- Make clear the connections between decoding (symbol to sound) and spelling (sound to symbol). At this point students have three powerful tools to facilitate word learning: ability to hear sounds in words, knowledge of the individual letter sounds or letter-sound combinations, and knowledge of the letters. Teach and remind students to rely on those skills and strategies when they encounter unfamiliar words or need to spell a word. However, ensure that students understand that some words are not spelled as they sound. The spelling of those words must be memorized at this stage.
- Teach decoding strategies initially, using words with meanings familiar to students.

Multisyllabic word reading. As students progress in word-analysis skills, they encounter more complex words, particularly words with more than one syllable. In the second grade students learn the rules of syllabication. Two strategies aid multisyllabic word recognition—breaking the word into syllables and learning prefixes and suffixes.

Sight-word reading. Second-grade word-analysis instruction must systematically teach children sight-word recognition of high-frequency words. When sight words (high-frequency irregular words) are being taught, it is important for the teacher to:

1. Select words that have high utility; that is, words that are used frequently in grade-appropriate literature and informational text.
2. Sequence high-frequency irregular words to avoid potential confusion. For example, high-frequency words that are often confused by students should be strategically separated for initial instruction.

3. Limit the number of sight words introduced at one time (five to seven new words).
4. Preteach the sight words prior to reading connected text.
5. Provide a cumulative review of important high-frequency sight words as part of daily reading instruction (two to three minutes).

Fluency. The benchmark of fluent readers in the second grade is the ability to read grade-level material aloud and accurately in a manner that sounds like natural speech. The essential questions to be asked: What should second-grade speech sound like? How do we define fluency for second graders? Research studies indicate that students reading at the fiftieth percentile in spring in the second grade read 90 to 100 words per minute correct orally (Hasbrouck and Tindal, 1992) and that, on average, they increase their reading fluency approximately 1.46 correct words per minute per week (Fuchs et al., 1993).

Vocabulary and Concept Development

In the second grade curriculum and instruction extend the understanding of concepts and vocabulary in four primary ways:

- Knowledge and use of antonyms and synonyms
- Use of individual words in compounds to predict the meaning
- Use of prefixes and suffixes to assist in word meaning
- Learning multiple-meaning words

Two emphases in vocabulary development initiated in kindergarten should carry through into the second grade:
(1) direct instruction of specific concepts and vocabulary essential to understanding text; and (2) exposure to a broad and diverse vocabulary through listening to and reading stories and informational texts.

Of the new vocabulary skills introduced in the second grade, the use of prefixes and suffixes to aid in word meaning is a skill that students may use frequently as they read more complex and challenging texts. When teaching prefixes and suffixes to assist in word meaning, teachers should emphasize those that occur with the greatest frequency in second-grade material. Prefixes and suffixes that are most useful in understanding word meaning should be introduced before less useful ones.

In presenting instruction in prefixes and suffixes, the teacher should:

1. Introduce the prefix or suffix in isolation, indicating its meaning and then connecting it in words.
2. Illustrate the prefix or suffix with multiple examples.
3. Use examples when the roots are familiar to students (e.g., *remake* and *replay* as opposed to *record* and *recode*) (Cunningham, 1998).
4. Integrate words into sentences and ask students to tell the meaning of the word in the sentence.
5. Review previously introduced words cumulatively.
6. Separate prefixes that appear similar in initial instructional sequences (e.g., *pre, pro*).

Reading Reading Comprehension

In the second grade informational text gains greater prominence than before as students learn to (1) use conventions of informational text (e.g., titles, chapter headings) to locate important information; (2) ask clarifying questions; and (3) interpret information from graphs, diagrams, and charts. Concurrently, students learn the importance of reading in locating facts and details in narrative and informational text and recognizing cause-and-effect relationships.

Given the great number of comprehension skills and strategies to be learned, instruction should be organized in a coherent structure. A question that might be asked here is, Which skills and strategies should be used during prereading, reading, and postreading?

Instruction in reading comprehension is the intentional teaching of information or strategies to increase a student's understanding of what is read. When the second-grade standards are considered in conjunction with the big picture of instruction in reading comprehension, it is important to recognize that such instruction consists of three phases. In the *acquisition phase* the skill or strategy is taught explicitly with the aid of carefully designed examples and practice. This phase may consist of one or more days depending on the skill or strategy being taught. The *focused application phase* should continue across several instructional sessions to illustrate the applicability and utility of the skill or strategy. The *strategic integration phase*, occurring over the course of the year, is designed to connect previously taught skills and strategies with new content and text. Curriculum and instruction should cumulatively build a repertoire of skills and strategies that are introduced, applied, and integrated with appropriate texts and for authentic purposes over the course of the year. As students begin to develop reading-comprehension skills, effective teachers foster interest and motivation to read and assist students in developing an appreciation of the rewards and joys of reading.

Reading **Literary Response and Analysis**

In the second grade students work extensively in analyzing the elements of narrative text and comparing and contrasting elements within and among texts. Building on their prior schemata of stories, students read versions of stories written by different authors to gain an understanding of the influence of the writer and the culture. They use the

narrative text structure to write brief narratives (Writing Applications Standard 2.1) and retell stories (Listening and Speaking Standard 2.1). Emphasis on comprehension is centered on teaching students to analyze narratives, compare and contrast, and generate alternative endings. The connections with the listening, speaking, and writing domains are clear in this strand. Instructional effectiveness and efficiency can be gained by employing inherent connections in content.

As students learn to compare and contrast, many will benefit from a structure specifying the dimensions that will be compared and contrasted. The story grammar structure works elegantly in this instance as a tool for prompting information to compare and contrast, organizing information, and grouping related ideas to maintain a consistent focus (Writing Strategies Standard 1.1). This feature will be the focus of the instructional and curricular profile that appears at the end of the second-grade section.

Writing Writing Strategies and Writing Applications

Students become more comfortable and familiar with writing when it is a regular and frequent activity. In the second grade writing progresses to narratives in which students move through a logical sequence of events. They learn to write about an experience in the first grade and to write for different audiences and purposes in the second grade. The narrative structure and requirements expand in the second grade to multiple paragraphs that integrate knowledge of setting, characters, objectives, and events to develop more complex and complete narratives. In addition, second graders learn an additional text structure, the friendly letter, as a form of written communication.

Applications of narrative and letter writing depend on well-developed writing strategies, including grouping of related ideas, facility with various stages of writing, and legible handwriting. In the second grade students focus on learning to revise text to

improve sequence and increase descriptive detail. Concurrently, they require instruction in distinguishing between complete and incomplete sentences, extending grammatical proficiency with parts of speech, applying correct capitalization and punctuation, and expanding their repertoire of correctly spelled words. Spelling instruction progresses to include inflected endings and irregular or exception words (e.g., *said, who, what, why*). The instructional guidelines for systematic instruction introduced in the first grade are equally important in the second grade. They consist of small sets of words that are introduced explicitly, reviewed frequently, and integrated into writing exercises.

The standards on which writing strategies and applications are based may be conceived as discrete skills that learners apply. Alternatively, and more effectively, the individual skills can be conceptualized in strands. Within a single writing lesson, instruction might occur along each of the major strands in writing strategies (e.g., organization, penmanship, revision) and written and oral English conventions (e.g., sentence structure, grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spelling). Instruction in each strand can address the specific dimensions of grammar and punctuation appropriate to the individual student.

In instruction according to strands, incremental and progressive skills and strategies within and across a range of strands related to a larger domain are introduced and learned to provide a precise, coherent course of study. Such instruction, both specific and related, which focuses on specific skills and strategies and incorporates them into exercises once learners are proficient with individual skills, is especially appropriate for writing. Features of this instruction are as follows:

1. Dimensions of a complex task are analyzed, and the strands are identified (e.g., organization, grammar, sentence structure, and stages of writing).

2. Specific objectives within a strand are identified and sequenced individually.
3. Cross-strand skills are integrated once learners are proficient in individual strand skills and strategies.
4. Previously taught skills and strategies are reviewed cumulatively.
5. The instructional analysis of the content and proficiency of the learner will prescribe the length of the instructional sequence.

Listening and Speaking Listening and Speaking Strategies; Speaking Applications

In the second grade the students' proficiency in speaking and listening expands quantitatively and qualitatively. The students are responsible for comprehending larger amounts of information presented orally (e.g., three- to four-step instructions) and for communicating their ideas with increased attention to detail and substance (e.g., reporting on a topic with supportive facts and details). Speaking strategies are applied in two primary formats—recounting experiences or stories and reporting on a topic with facts and details.

Narrative experiences or stories and reports, which are the focus of second-grade instruction, have identifiable and generalizable structures taught in reading and writing and can be used to communicate ideas orally. Although students may be quite facile in identifying the common elements of stories by the second grade, identifying or recognizing is a simpler task in most cases than generating and producing the elements of text in oral reports. Instruction to prepare students to recall stories or experiences or to report on a topic should proceed from (1) the reading of text for which students know the elements (e.g., characters, setting, problem, important events, resolution to the

problem, conclusion); to (2) the identification of those elements in stories and topics; and (3) the production or generation of the elements.

Students should be introduced to the simple strategy of organizing both narrative and expository texts chronologically. That type of organization is particularly applicable to language arts activities that reinforce the history–social science standards for this grade level. In addition to understanding chronological organization, students can build on the *who, what, when, where,* and *how* strategy learned in the first grade as another way of organizing oral and written communication.

Content and Instructional Connections

The following activities integrate standards across domains, strands, and academic disciplines. Teachers may wish to:

1. Reinforce the connections between phonemic awareness (hearing the sounds in words), phonological recoding (translating a printed word into its letter-sound correspondences), and translating sounds into print (spelling).
2. Extend the words that students can read (e.g., special vowel spellings, plurals) into their spelling and writing.
3. Incorporate words taken from vocabulary instruction (e.g., synonyms, words with prefixes) into exercises providing systematic opportunities to use words in sentences throughout the day.
4. Incorporate comprehension strategies into other content areas (e.g., reading a science textbook when appropriate) and practice those strategies.
5. Use story grammar elements as a common structure for comprehending, retelling, and composing stories.

6. Select appropriate content standards in science, mathematics, and history–social science to address within the instructional time allotted for instruction in the language arts.

Please see Appendix B for examples of standards that span domains and strands.

Second Grade Curricular and Instructional Profile

Reading Standard 3.1

DOMAIN

Reading

STRAND

3.0 Literacy response and analysis

SUBSTRAND

Narrative analysis of grade-level-appropriate text

STANDARD

3.1 Compare and contrast plots, settings, and characters presented by different authors.

Prerequisite standards. Kindergarten Literary Response and Analysis Standard 3.3: Identify characters, settings, and important events.

First-Grade Literary Response and Analysis Standard 3.1: Identify and describe the elements of plot, setting, and characters in a story as well as the story's beginning, middle, and ending.

Curricular and Instructional Decisions

Instructional Objectives

1. Identify the major events (plot), settings, and characters of stories.
2. Compare and contrast those elements.

Successful comparison and contrast of story elements depend on the ability to identify the major elements of individual stories. In this standard second graders use the literary

elements of stories to identify similarities and differences between and among a wide, varied sampling of children's literature.

Instructional Design

Comparing and contrasting textual elements involve a host of factors that make this task either manageable or extraordinarily difficult. Initial instruction is likely to be most effective and efficient if it adheres to the following guidelines. Teachers may wish to:

1. Begin with a review and practice of identifying story grammar elements (e.g., setting, characters, problems, attempts to solve the problem or sequence of events, and resolution of the problem or conclusion).
2. Support readers' identification of story grammar elements with a think sheet or story note sheet that outlines the elements students should identify.
3. Select stories with parallel structures that adhere to conventional story lines.
4. Use stories in which elements are explicit and clearly identifiable.
5. Do not proceed to a comparison and contrast analysis until students can identify elements of individual stories reliably. (Provide additional practice if necessary.)
6. Model how to compare and contrast explicitly, focusing on specific elements.
7. Begin with an oral comparison and contrast analysis. Have the students read the same story as a group and use a comparison and contrast version of the story grammar elements to indicate whether elements are the same or different.
8. Include stories in which some elements are comparable and some are different.
9. Begin with shorter stories and proceed to longer ones.
10. Use stories with largely familiar vocabulary. Stories that are not presented orally should be within the readability level of students.

11. Support learners in initial analyses by providing a concrete, overt strategy for comparing and contrasting elements that designates similarities and differences.
12. Provide sufficient practice in both components of instruction: (a) identifying elements; and (b) comparing and contrasting elements between and among stories.

Progression of Examples for Comparison and Contrast Analysis

- *First teaching sequence:* two stories, relatively brief, with explicit story grammar elements. Some elements in both stories should be comparable and some should differ (e.g., Peter Rabbit and Curious George are both "curious, mischievous").
- *Second teaching sequence:* two stories of moderate length, with explicit story grammar elements. Some elements in both stories should be comparable, and some should differ.
- *Third teaching sequence:* two or three stories that parallel the reading requirements of second graders. Elements are explicit.

Note: Each teaching sequence may require several days of instruction and practice for students to become proficient. This sequence is not intended to connote that this range of proficiency can be mastered in three days.

Instructional Delivery

1. Begin the instructional sequence with a review of the elements of an individual story in which the students identify setting, characters, problems, attempts to solve the problem or sequence of events, and resolution of the problem or conclusion. One of the stories should be included in the subsequent comparison and contrast analysis.
2. Identify explicitly for the students the critical elements; that is, read a section of the story and talk students through the process of identifying individual

elements (see the previous description). If the students have difficulty with specific elements, provide further practice with additional stories.

3. Follow up teacher-directed identification of the elements with guided practice during which the students (as a whole class or in respective reading groups) identify the elements with the teacher's assistance.

4. Conclude this segment of instruction with independent practice. Students should use story note sheets or summary sheets to identify the elements of a story.

5. Model the process of comparing and contrasting story elements by using a structured tool. Walk students through the comparison and contrast process, thinking out loud as you model. (For example, "In *Peter Rabbit* the story takes place in a small garden in the country. In *Curious George* the story takes place in a busy city. The settings of these stories are different.") Continue modeling through all the elements in the story.

6. Explain the steps in the strategy: "When you read stories, they often have the same parts or elements. We are going to look at those parts to see how the stories are the same and how they are different."

7. Model multiple examples.

8. Guide students through the process of using the story elements to compare and contrast stories, using questions: "Where do these stories take place? Who are the characters? How are they the same? How are they different?" Provide corrective feedback. In this phase decrease prompts and assign greater responsibility to students.

9. Test students, using the same text format as in the teaching sequences. Do so immediately after the last teaching example to determine whether the students have acquired the strategy.

10. If students cannot use the strategy to compare and contrast story elements, analyze their responses to determine (1) whether the difficulties are specific to certain elements or are more generic; or (2) whether the difficulties are specific to certain students. Provide appropriate instruction and practice.

11. Present additional examples to assess student understanding.

Assessment

Entry-Level Assessment

1. *Entry-Level Assessment for Instructional Planning*

   a. The most important entry-level assessment information for this standard is the extent to which students are already familiar with the elements of stories. The most direct assessment is for students to read a story and identify the elements either in response to a list of elements or on their own.

   b. Determine whether further instruction is needed in the identification of the basic elements of story grammar.

Monitoring Student Progress

2. *Monitoring Student Progress Toward the Instructional Objective.* This assessment phase is designed to determine the effectiveness of instruction and students' mastery of what has been taught. By designing tasks that align with the sequence of instruction, student performance can be used to determine whether to proceed to the next phase of instruction or to conduct further instruction and practice at the current phase.

Post-test Assessment

3. *Post-test Assessment Toward the Standard.* Analyzing stories by comparing and contrasting critical elements is a strategy that begins in the second grade and continues for many grades. This strategy should not be seen as a discrete skill that is taught and assessed at one time of the year. Narrative analysis should be distributed throughout the second grade to assess students' retention of the skill and to demonstrate the broad utility of the strategy. Published materials should emphasize this strategy and distribute its use across literature read in the second grade.

For a summative analysis a grid may be used that compares and contrasts story elements. Or students can be assigned to write a composition comparing and contrasting stories.

Universal Access

Reading Difficulties or Disabilities

1. *Students with Reading Difficulties or Disabilities*

a. Students reading below grade level will require reading selections taken from below-grade-level literature. At this stage the goal is for students to learn the elements of story grammar and the comparison and contrast analysis strategy. This strategy can be introduced, discussed, and applied to stories that are read aloud to students. They can then use the analysis strategies with texts they read on their own.

b. Students with disabilities or learning difficulties may need more extensive instruction in comparison and contrast. Materials should include examples of elements easily identifiable for basic comparison and contrast exercises.

c. Students may need scaffolded story sheets that not only identify the story grammar elements, such as setting or resolution, but also define setting—where and when the story takes place; and resolution—how the problem was solved.

d. Instructional materials should provide a range of examples to allow more extensive practice.

Advanced Learners

2. *Students Who Are Advanced Learners*

a. Advanced learners who have demonstrated above-grade-level comprehension skills and who have extensive reading experience may be grouped and given higher-level materials and a more sophisticated analysis of story elements. Regardless of how they are grouped, the teacher should substitute an advanced assignment for the regular lesson.

b. Advanced students might develop their own stories, orally or in writing that compare and contrast a given story provided in class. They might compare and contrast two versions of the same story by different authors. Or they might rewrite a portion of a story to illustrate differences. These students may make connections that vary from the expected, given their ability to think creatively and abstractly and to generalize at an age earlier than that of their chronological peers.

English Learners

3. *Students Who Are English Learners*

a. Through carefully designed instruction students should learn the process of identifying elements of stories and comparing and contrasting those elements. For students whose primary language is not English (English

learners), a foremost problem can be the vocabulary used in the stories. The concepts and vocabulary may require more extensive development than is necessary for other students.

English learners can be helped to develop vocabulary through preteaching; providing vocabulary instruction; modeling the pronunciation of words; scaffolding (e.g., through summary sheets, visuals, realia, and compare and contrast sheets); and encouraging the students to use the vocabulary from the stories in class discussions and writing assignments. These students should learn more than the meaning of words. To accomplish grade-level objectives, they need to know how to use in their writing the words they have learned. To do so, they must learn the grammatical rules governing the use of words. When teaching words, the teacher should make sure to provide students with numerous examples of sentences containing the words, encourage them to use words in their speech and writing, and provide corrective feedback when appropriate.

b. English learners may require more extensive instruction in comparison and contrast. Resources should include explicit instruction in words and expressions used to compare and contrast ("In comparison with . . . , *X* is different from *Y* because . . . ; both *X* and *Y* have a similar setting").

c. English learners benefit from extensive exposure to narrative models, comparison and contrast analyses, and multiple opportunities to use story elements to compare and contrast stories.

d. The teacher should select some texts that children of diverse cultures can relate to easily. Whenever possible, the texts should be authentic. Simplified texts should be used only with students with weak proficiency in English.

Students who use the simplified texts need intensive English-language instruction to enable them to catch up with their peers.

Instructional Materials

1. Instructional materials should contain explicit instruction in strategies for comparing and contrasting stories. Enough selections should be made available at each level of instruction to ensure student mastery of the strategy.
2. Texts should be carefully selected and should contain critical features, including explicitness of the elements, length, familiarity of vocabulary, and readability.
3. Materials should include a range of selections and a corresponding set of assessment tasks to evaluate student performance at each stage of learning.
4. Materials should further include reproducible scaffolds or supports for students, including summary sheets that outline the story grammar elements and grids that use story grammar elements for comparison and contrast.

Second Grade English–Language Arts Content Standards

Reading

1.0 Word Analysis, Fluency, and Systematic Vocabulary Development

Students understand the basic features of reading. They select letter patterns and know how to translate them into spoken language by using phonics, syllabication, and word parts. They apply this knowledge to achieve fluent oral and silent reading.

Decoding and Word Recognition

1.1 Recognize and use knowledge of spelling patterns (e.g., diphthongs, special vowel spellings) when reading.

1.2 Apply knowledge of basic syllabication rules when reading (e.g., vowel-consonant-vowel = *su/per;* vowel-consonant/consonant-vowel = *sup/per*).

1.3 Decode two-syllable nonsense words and regular multisyllable words.

1.4 Recognize common abbreviations (e.g., *Jan., Sun., Mr., St.*).

1.5 Identify and correctly use regular plurals (e.g., *-s, -es, -ies*) and irregular plurals (e.g., *fly/flies, wife/wives*).

1.6 Read aloud fluently and accurately and with appropriate intonation and expression.

Vocabulary and Concept Development

1.7 Understand and explain common antonyms and synonyms.

1.8 Use knowledge of individual words in unknown compound words to predict their meaning.

1.9 Know the meaning of simple prefixes and suffixes (e.g., *over-, un-, - ing, -ly*).

1.10 Identify simple multiple-meaning words.

2.0 Reading Comprehension

Students read and understand grade-level-appropriate material. They draw upon a variety of comprehension strategies as needed (e.g., generating and responding to essential questions, making predictions, comparing information from several sources). The selections in *Recommended Literature: Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve* (CDE, 2002) illustrate the quality and complexity of the materials to be read by students. In addition to their regular school reading, by grade four, students read one-half million words annually, including a good representation of grade-level-appropriate narrative and expository text (e.g., classic and contemporary literature, magazines, newspapers, online information). In grade two, students continue to make progress toward this goal.

Structural Features of Informational Materials

2.1 Use titles, tables of contents, and chapter headings to locate information in expository text.

Comprehension and Analysis of Grade-Level-Appropriate Text

2.2 State the purpose in reading (i.e., tell what information is sought).

2.3 Use knowledge of the author's purpose(s) to comprehend informational text.

2.4 Ask clarifying questions about essential textual elements of exposition (e.g., *why, what if, how*).

2.5 Restate facts and details in the text to clarify and organize ideas.

2.6 Recognize cause-and-effect relationships in a text.

2.7 Interpret information from diagrams, charts, and graphs.

2.8 Follow two-step written instructions.

3.0. Literary Response and Analysis

Students read and respond to a wide variety of significant works of children's literature. They distinguish between the structural features of the text and the literary terms or elements (e.g., theme, plot, setting, characters). The selections in *Recommended Literature: Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve* (CDE, 2002) illustrate the quality and complexity of the materials to be read by students.

Narrative Analysis of Grade-Level-Appropriate Text

3.1 Compare and contrast plots, settings, and characters presented by different authors.

3.2 Generate alternative endings to plots and identify the reason or reasons for, and the impact of, the alternatives.

3.3 Compare and contrast different versions of the same stories that reflect different cultures.

3.4 Identify the use of rhythm, rhyme, and alliteration in poetry.

Writing

1.0 Writing Strategies

Students write clear and coherent sentences and paragraphs that develop a central idea. Their writing shows they consider the audience and purpose. Students progress through the stages of the writing process (e.g., prewriting, drafting, revising, editing successive versions).

Organization and Focus

1.1 Group related ideas and maintain a consistent focus.

Penmanship

1.2 Create readable documents with legible handwriting.

Research

1.3 Understand the purposes of various reference materials (e.g., dictionary, thesaurus, atlas).

Evaluation and Revision

1.4 Revise original drafts to improve sequence and provide more descriptive detail.

2.0 Writing Applications (Genres and Their Characteristics)

Students write compositions that describe and explain familiar objects, events, and experiences. Student writing demonstrates a command of standard American English and the drafting, research, and organizational strategies outlined in Writing Standard 1.0.

Using the writing strategies of grade two outlined in Writing Standard 1.0, students:

2.1 Write brief narratives based on their experiences:

a. Move through a logical sequence of events.

b. Describe the setting, characters, objects, and events in detail.

2.2 Write a friendly letter complete with the date, salutation, body, closing, and signature.

Written and Oral English Language Conventions

The standards for written and oral English language conventions have been placed between those for writing and for listening and speaking because these conventions are essential to both sets of skills.

1.0 Written and Oral English Language Conventions

Students write and speak with a command of standard English conventions appropriate to this grade level.

Sentence Structure

1.1 Distinguish between complete and incomplete sentences.

1.2 Recognize and use the correct word order in written sentences.

Grammar

1.3 Identify and correctly use various parts of speech, including nouns and verbs, in writing and speaking.

Punctuation

1.4 Use commas in the greeting and closure of a letter and with dates and items in a series.

1.5 Use quotation marks correctly.

Capitalization

1.6 Capitalize all proper nouns, words at the beginning of sentences and greetings, months and days of the week, and titles and initials of people.

Spelling

1.7 Spell frequently used, irregular words correctly (e.g., *was, were, says, said, who, what, why).*

1.8 Spell basic short-vowel, long-vowel, *r*-controlled, and consonant-blend patterns correctly.

Listening and Speaking

1.0 Listening and Speaking Strategies

Students listen critically and respond appropriately to oral communication. They speak in a manner that guides the listener to understand important ideas by using proper phrasing, pitch, and modulation.

Comprehension

1.1 Determine the purpose or purposes of listening (e.g., to obtain information, to solve problems, for enjoyment).

1.2 Ask for clarification and explanation of stories and ideas.

1.3 Paraphrase information that has been shared orally by others.

1.4 Give and follow three- and four-step oral directions.

Organization and Delivery of Oral Communication

1.5 Organize presentations to maintain a clear focus.

1.6 Speak clearly and at an appropriate pace for the type of communication (e.g., informal discussion, report to class).

1.7 Recount experiences in a logical sequence.

1.8 Retell stories, including characters, setting, and plot.

1.9 Report on a topic with supportive facts and details.

2.0 Speaking Applications (Genres and Their Characteristics)

Students deliver brief recitations and oral presentations about familiar experiences or interests that are organized around a coherent thesis statement. Student speaking demonstrates a command of standard American English and the organizational and delivery strategies outlined in Listening and Speaking Standard 1.0.

Using the speaking strategies of grade two outlined in Listening and Speaking Standard 1.0, students:

2.1 Recount experiences or present stories:

a. Move through a logical sequence of events.

b. Describe story elements (e.g., characters, plot, setting).

2.2 Report on a topic with facts and details, drawing from several sources of information.

Third Grade Standards and Instruction

The curriculum and instruction offered in the third grade should enable students to (1) read grade-level fiction and nonfiction materials independently with literal and inferential comprehension; (2) develop a knowledge of common spelling patterns, roots, and affixes; (3) use conventions of spelling and conventions of print (e.g., paragraphs, end-sentence punctuation); (4) clarify new words, make predictions, and summarize reading passages; (5) answer questions that require analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of grade-level narrative and informational text; and (6) support answers to questions about what they have read by drawing on background knowledge and specific details from the text.

The third grade is often considered the last period of formal instruction in decoding for students who still need it, although they continue to recognize new words beyond this grade level. At the end of this pivotal year, instruction in phonics is phased out from the formal curriculum as a focal point for students who have learned to decode. Increased and extended emphasis is placed on vocabulary acquisition, comprehension strategies, text analysis, and writing. Students are also taught to use context as an independent vocabulary strategy.

Instruction in identifying the main idea, prior-knowledge connections, and literal and inferential comprehension assumes greater prominence, as does increased variety in the narratives selected for reading (e.g., fairy tales, fables, textbooks). Building strategies for writing sentences and paragraphs is also emphasized. Students learn formal sentence structure, the four basic types of sentences, and the use of the sentences in written paragraphs. Finally, students take a big step forward, learning how to use speaking strategies and applications and how to deliver prose, poetry, and

personal narratives and experiences with fluency, intonation, and expression. The strands to be emphasized at the third-grade level are listed on the following page under the appropriate domains.

Each of the strands is addressed separately with the exception of the written and oral English-language conventions strand, which is integrated within appropriate sections.

Reading
1.0 Word Analysis, Fluency, and Systematic Vocabulary Development
2.0 Reading Comprehension
3.0 Literary Response and Analysis

Writing
1.0 Writing Strategies
2.0 Writing Applications (Genres and Their Characteristics)

Written and Oral English-Language Conventions
1.0 Written and Oral English-Language Conventions

Listening and Speaking
1.0 Listening and Speaking Strategies
2.0 Speaking Applications (Genres and Their Characteristics)

Reading Word Analysis, Fluency, and Vocabulary Development

Decoding and Word Recognition

Specific decoding instruction in the earlier grades and redundancy of exposure through repeated practice have developed a stable and reliable strategy for analyzing words. As with earlier instruction in decoding and word recognition, students will need explicit instruction for word families (phonograms). Many of the same principles for selecting and sequencing instruction in the early grades apply here: (1) separating word parts that are highly similar (e.g., *ight* and *aight*); (2) introducing word parts that occur with high frequency over those that occur in only a few words; and (3) teaching the word parts first and then incorporating the words into sentences and connected text.

The word-recognition substrand in the third grade emphasizes reading harder and bigger words (i.e., multisyllabic words) and reading all words more fluently. Students further their word-analysis and fluency skills through instruction centered on orthographically larger and more complex units (e.g., *ight, aught, own).* They may learn to apply the orthographic unit *ight* first in such simple words as (pl)*ight*, (m)*ight*, and (sl)*ight*. When students are successful in reading simpler words with *ight,* word analysis should be extended to more complex words in which *ight* occurs in different positions (e.g., l*ight*ning, overn*ight*, br*igh*tness, forthr*ight*, del*ight*, and kn*ight*).

In the third grade students will also need to learn strategies to decode multisyllabic words. They can be taught to use the structural features of such word parts as affixes (e.g., *pre*-, *mis*-, -*tion*) to aid in word recognition. Economy can be achieved by teaching both the word part (e.g., *un*) and its meaning (*not*), then applying the strategy to words that follow the rules. In this structural analysis of the word, students are taught to look for the affix(es) and then find the root or base word.

Guidelines for reading big or multisyllabic words (Nagy et al. 1992, cited in Cunningham 1998) call for:

1. Providing explicit explanations, including modeling, “think-alouds,” guided practice, and the gradual transfer of responsibility to students
2. Relying on examples more than abstract rules (Begin with familiar words. Show “nonexamples.” Use word parts rather than have students search for little words within a word. *Examples:* depart, report.)
3. Teaching what is most useful
4. Making clear the limitations of structural analysis
5. Using extended text in opportunities for application

Cunningham provides a model for reading big words that combines reading, meaning, and spelling and extends the steps by teaching (1) prefixes that are useful from a meaning standpoint (e.g., *re-*); (2) suffixes that are most useful (e.g., *-ly, -er, -ful*); and (3) a few useful roots (e.g., *play, work, agree*). Students are also taught to spell words that have high utility for meaning, spelling, and decoding.

In addition to being taught structural analysis, students should be taught strategies to confirm the fit of the word in context. Although contextual analysis has limited usefulness as a single word-recognition strategy, it expands students' capacity for word analysis and recognition when used to confirm the accuracy of words identified by decoding and structural analysis. Words identified through the decoding of letter sounds or letter combinations are followed by recognition of larger units of words, including onsets and rimes and common word parts, such as prefixes and suffixes. After decoding and structural analysis have occurred, contextual analysis can be used to verify the accuracy and fit of the word in the sentence.

Extended word-analysis skills and ample opportunities to practice skills in connected text should enable third-grade students to read grade-appropriate text accurately and fluently. A study addressing target rates found that in third-grade classrooms students typically read 79 correct words per minute in the fall and 114 in the spring (Hasbrouck and Tindal, 1992). Markell and Deno (1997) found that a minimum threshold for acceptable comprehension was an ability to read correctly 90 words per minute. That is, students who read 90 or more words per minute correctly scored 80 percent or above on a measure of comprehension. On average a third grader's weekly reading fluency increases approximately 1.08 words per minute (Fuchs et al., 1993). As students learn to recognize words automatically, they should have opportunities to hear and practice

reading text aloud, emphasizing pacing, intonation, and expression. Fluency or facility with print frees up cognitive resources for comprehension.

Vocabulary and Concept Development

In the early grades students learn approximately 3,000 new words per year *if* they read one-half million to one million words of running text per year. Obviously, it is educationally impossible for students to learn even a sizable portion of the 3,000 words through direct instructional approaches alone. Students in the third grade further their knowledge of vocabulary in significant ways, primarily through independent reading but also through independent vocabulary-learning strategies. In addition to direct instruction in synonyms, antonyms, and so on and explicit strategies for teaching the hierarchical relationship among words (e.g., living things/animal/mammal/dog), students are introduced to two strategies for independent learning of vocabulary. The first strategy is to learn to use the dictionary to understand the meaning of unknown words—a complex task with special constraints for third graders. The words in the dictionary definition are often more difficult than the target word itself. Dictionary usage should be taught explicitly with grade-appropriate dictionaries that allow students to access and understand the meaning of an unknown word. Moreover, understanding the definition of words alone has limited staying power unless the words are used in context and are encountered frequently.

A second independent vocabulary strategy introduced in the third grade is using context to gain the meaning of an unfamiliar word. Context includes the words surrounding the unfamiliar word that provide information to its meaning. Because not all contexts are created equal, however, initial instruction must be designed carefully to enable learners to acquire this important vocabulary strategy. Students should learn to

use context effectively because most word meanings are learned from context. The third-grade curricular and instructional profile focuses on that strategy. In addition to the independent word-learning strategies, the third-grade curricula and instruction extend the understanding of concepts and vocabulary of the English language through (1) learning and using antonyms and synonyms; (2) using individual words in compound words to predict the meaning; (3) using prefixes and suffixes to assist in word meaning; and (4) learning simple multiple-meaning words.

Two vocabulary emphases initiated in kindergarten should carry through in the third grade; that is, direct instruction in specific concepts and vocabulary essential to understanding text and exposure to a broad and diverse vocabulary through listening to and reading stories. Of the new vocabulary skills introduced in the third grade, using prefixes and suffixes to aid in word meaning is one that students will use frequently as they read more complex and challenging text. (See the earlier discussion for guidance in teaching prefixes and suffixes.)

Reading Reading Comprehension

In the third grade emphasis is placed on narrative and expository texts and literal and inferential comprehension. Third-grade students expand comprehension skills and strategies by:

- Using conventions of informational text (e.g., titles, chapter headings, glossaries) to locate important information
- Using prior knowledge to ask questions, make connections, and support answers
- Recalling major points in text and modifying predictions
- Recalling main ideas from expository text
- Demonstrating comprehension by identifying answers in the text

- Extracting information from text
- Following simple, multiple-step instructions

A major advancement in comprehension for the third grade focuses on identifying and recalling the main idea and supporting details of expository texts. In writing there is a related standard (Writing Standard 1.1) according to which students write paragraphs that include topic sentences (i.e., main ideas) and supporting facts and details. Expository text is typically more difficult to comprehend than narrative text. The ability to comprehend expository text is essential for achievement in school, especially in the later elementary grades and in the middle school years.

Successful instruction in complex comprehension strategies, such as finding the main idea, depends largely on the design of the information taught. Well-designed text enables readers to identify relevant information, including main ideas and the relations between ideas (Seidenberg, 1989). In a review of text-processing research, Seidenberg (1989) found that general education students from elementary school through college demonstrated difficulty in analyzing the main ideas in textbooks, especially if the main ideas were implied rather than stated clearly.

For initial instruction in the acquisition of main ideas, the teacher should consider:

- Beginning with linguistic units appropriate to the learner; for example, using pictures and a set of individual sentences before presenting paragraph or passage-level text to help students learn the concept of main idea
- Using text in which the main idea is explicitly stated and is clear and in which the ideas follow a logical order
- Using familiar vocabulary and passages at appropriate readability levels for learners

- Using familiar topics
- Using familiar, simple syntactical structures and sentence types
- Progressing to more complex structures in which main ideas are not explicit and passages are longer

Reading **Literary Response and Analysis**

The third-grade curriculum and instruction are focused on (1) broadening the type of narrative texts students read and study (e.g., fairy tales, fables); (2) distinguishing literary forms (poetry, prose, fiction, and nonfiction); and (3) deepening students' understanding of elements in narrative text.

In the third grade students read a wide variety of literature (poems, fiction, nonfiction) and narrative text structures (fairy tales, legends). They should also begin to examine the commonalities (e.g., plots, characters, settings) in story structure, particularly the plots in different types of stories and the uniqueness of each story. The structural element of theme is added to the story elements to extend the schema for the comprehension of stories. Students should begin to identify the speaker and articulate the purpose.

Particular emphasis should be placed on extending the understanding of character development by studying what characters say and do. The actions, motives, attributes, and feelings of characters may be abstract concepts for many third graders. Just as students need a framework such as basic story grammar to aid in the comprehension of the basic elements of stories, they may also need prompts or structures to assist in the identification and analysis of character. This framework or map may be a simple structure that makes visible and obvious the features of characters to which students

should attend. For example, in the chart on the following page, the main characters from *Charlotte's Web* (White, 1952) are identified, and critical character features are specified. The sections in the chart serve to allow students to trace changes in characters over the course of the text.

As in all well-designed instruction in comprehension, a carefully designed sequence of examples should be provided when students are in the acquisition phase of learning to extend their understanding and facility with character development. The sequence should first be modeled and then guided by the teacher and, finally, practiced by the students. Opportunities for corrective feedback should also be provided.

Character	Section	Section	Section
Charlotte	How she feels:	Changes:	Changes:
	How she acts:	Changes:	Changes:
	How she looks:	Changes:	Changes:
Wilbur	How he feels:	Changes:	Changes:
	How he acts:	Changes:	Changes:
	How he looks:	Changes:	Changes:

Writing — Writing Strategies and Writing Applications

In the third grade students extend their writing strategies by (1) creating a single paragraph with a topic sentence and supporting details; (2) refining the legibility of their writing; (3) learning to access information from a range of reference materials (e.g., thesaurus, encyclopedia); (4) revising drafts to improve coherence and progression of ideas; and (5) progressing through the stages of the writing process.

Using these strategies, students continue to advance skills in written conventions as they learn to use declarative, interrogative, imperative, and exclamatory sentences.

Advanced grammatical conventions, particularly subject-verb agreement and use of the tense, are the focus of third-grade instruction, along with continued development in capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.

As students learn to read words with double consonants, inflected endings, *y*-derivatives (e.g., *baby/ies*), and so forth, they are ready to learn to spell the words. Guidelines outlined in the first grade for spelling instruction are applicable in this grade. *Homophones* (i.e., words that sound alike but have different spellings and meanings: *their, there,* and *they're*) pose particular spelling problems. Homophones should be introduced a few at a time. It is recommended that a single homophone be introduced first. After mastery of that homophone, another may be presented. Once both homophones are mastered, they may be used in discrimination exercises in which meaning and context are emphasized.

In practice students apply those strategies and conventions as they learn and extend proficiency in writing narratives, descriptions, and personal and formal correspondence. This strategic integration of skills, strategies, and structures requires (1) explicit instruction in each of the individual components (e.g., sentence types, writing of paragraphs, use of tense); and (2) systematic connections of components to demonstrate the utility of the individual parts and communicate to students the big picture of writing. A common flaw in instructional materials is that they often fail to make the important connections for students. For example, students may learn to write declarative sentences but do not practice them or integrate them into other writing activities. Similarly, if students practice writing sentences with correct punctuation and capitalization but never apply the skills in larger contexts or for authentic purposes, instruction is fragmented. The skills are seemingly without purpose.

The goal in writing instruction must, therefore, be to ensure that component parts (skills, strategies, structures) are (1) identified; (2) carefully sequenced according to their complexity and use in more advanced writing applications; (3) developed to mastery; and (4) progressively and purposefully connected within and across content standards in the four academic areas and then incorporated into authentic writing exercises.

Listening and Speaking Listening and Speaking Strategies; Speaking Applications

In the third grade emphasis is placed on listening and speaking strategies and on speaking applications. Fourteen standards signify the importance of students' speaking and listening development, the amount and type of information they should comprehend, and the formats and methods they should use to communicate their knowledge and ideas.

The connections across the language arts domains (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) have been stressed in other sections of this framework but bear repeating because they have particular significance for developing students' speaking and listening skills. Just as students need structures, maps, or anchors to facilitate their understanding of narrative or expository text, they will require the same types of supporting structures when learning what to listen for and what to speak about. Simplistic as it may seem, students may not know what to include when summarizing (e.g., organizing descriptions or sequencing events). The parallels of the structures students learn in reading and writing apply directly to the goals of listening and speaking, and those connections require explicit, carefully designed instruction. The benefits of earlier teaching should be readily apparent because students already know

the elements of stories, descriptions, and sequences of events from previous instruction in reading and writing.

It is typically easier to retell than to create and easier to comprehend than to compose. Therefore, instructional materials and instruction should honor those inherent complexities and ensure that students first have opportunities to listen to and read narratives, descriptives, and sequences of events before being asked to write and orally present narratives, descriptives, and sequences of events. Instructional design must address further (1) the length of the information to be listened to or spoken; (2) familiarity with the topic; (3) familiarity with the vocabulary; and (4) syntactical complexity of the information.

Initial listening and speaking applications should be shorter in length, should be centered on more familiar topics, and should be less complex syntactically.

Content and Instructional Connections

The following activities integrate standards across domains, strands, and academic disciplines. Teachers may wish to:

1. Reinforce the connections between decoding, word recognition, spelling, and writing. Word families, multisyllabic words, and structural units (e.g., prefixes) that students learn to read should be incorporated into spelling and writing instruction and practice.
2. Incorporate words or word parts from vocabulary instruction (e.g., prefixes, synonyms) in systematic opportunities that use those words in sentences. Practice throughout the day and over a period of time.

3. Make connections between structures used for comprehension and composition. Demonstrate how text structures can be used across domains to enhance recall and composition.
4. Teach rules that generalize across reading materials and make explicit the connections of their use in a variety of subject areas (e.g., use context to help learn the meanings of words you do not know).
5. Make connections by incorporating and reinforcing specific skills and conventions (e.g., grammar, main idea, sentence types) across all writing assignments and exercises.
6. Select appropriate content standards for science, mathematics, and history–social science to address within language arts instructional time.

Please see Appendix B for examples of standards that span domains and strands.

Third Grade Curricular and Instructional Profile

Reading Standard 1.6

DOMAIN

Reading

STRAND

1.0 Word analysis, fluency, and systematic vocabulary development

SUBSTRAND

Vocabulary and concept development

STANDARD

3. Use sentence and word context to find the meaning of unknown words.

Prerequisite standards. First-Grade Reading Comprehension Standards 2.4, 2.5.

Standard 2.4: Use context to resolve ambiguities about word and sentence meanings.

Standard 2.5: Confirm predictions about what will happen next in a text by identifying key words.

Curricular and Instructional Decisions

Instructional Objective

When given a text (sentence or sentences) with unfamiliar vocabulary used in close proximity, students should first decode the word and then use the context to determine the word meaning.

Learning words from context involves a range of variables that enhance or impede the success of the strategy, including the student's previous knowledge about the subject matter, the proximity of other words in the passage that may serve as clues, and the difficulty of the reading selection.

Instructional Design

Successful learning from context depends largely on practice. Teachers can teach this strategy through:

1. Systematic selection and sequencing of examples (contexts)
2. Progression of context difficulty from shorter passages (e.g., 40 to 60 words with two or three unfamiliar words) to longer ones (e.g., 80 to 100 words with five or six unfamiliar words)
3. Explicit instruction and modeling in how to use context to learn word meaning

Contexts for Initial Instruction:

1. Unfamiliar words are limited to a manageable number (one every two to three sentences).
2. Unfamiliar words are kept within the students' readability level.
3. Contexts focus on a familiar topic.
4. Contexts include a range of examples in which new vocabulary is accessible through surrounding context and a few examples in which a dictionary must be used.
5. Contexts focus on vocabulary of high utility.

Instructional Delivery

1. Model the process of using context to learn new word meanings. Think out loud as you model: "I don't know the meaning of this word. I'll read the words around it to see if they help me." Show the conventions used to define new words (e.g., appositives).
2. Model multiple positive and negative examples (i.e., vocabulary for which the context does or does not provide meaning). Show students how to use a dictionary in the latter case.

3. Invite students to suggest which other words or passages provide clues to the meaning of the unfamiliar word.
4. Ask students to suggest synonyms for the unknown word and substitute the synonyms to see whether the meaning of the sentence changes or remains the same.
5. Guide students through the process of using the context to learn new word meanings. Provide corrective feedback.

Assessment

Entry-Level Assessment

1. *Entry-Level Assessment for Instructional Planning*. At the entry level assess student knowledge of the strategy to determine whether students need instruction in the strategy.

Monitoring Student Progress

2. *Monitoring Student Progress Toward the Instructional Objective.* Determine whether students can use context to understand unfamiliar word meanings. Use a range of examples, including shorter and longer passages as well as simple and complex contexts in which defining information is in close or far proximity to the unfamiliar word.

Post-test Assessment

3. *Post-test Assessment Toward the Standard.* Use post-tests throughout the year to measure whether students are able to use context to understand unfamiliar word meanings and whether they are retaining the meaning of the unfamiliar words over time.

Universal Access

Reading Difficulties or Disabilities

1. *Students with Reading Difficulties or Disabilities*
   a. Students with reading difficulties or disabilities must be very firm in prerequisite skills to benefit from context. The prerequisite skills include:
   •Decoding and word-recognition skills that enable students to read the text with 90 to 95 percent accuracy (If students cannot read the grade-level text, identify materials that are appropriate and teach the same strategy.)
   •Knowledge of words in context that define or explain the unfamiliar word
   b. Students with reading difficulties or disabilities may need more controlled examples with shorter length, fewer unknown words, and so forth.

Advanced Learners

2. *Students Who Are Advanced Learners*
   a. Entry-level assessment should be used to determine the necessity of teaching students to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words from context. Advanced learners are often characterized by their extensive vocabulary, making necessary the use of materials beyond their grade level to assess their skills.
   b. The level and type of instruction needed should be established. Students may progress rapidly to learning word meanings if context is separated from the target vocabulary once the basic strategy is known.
   c. Students with a high level of proficiency in this skill may benefit from exposure to more sophisticated alternate activities for vocabulary development instead of this instruction.

English Learners

3. *Students Who Are English Learners*

a. For English learners to benefit from context, they must know the grammatical features, idioms, and vocabulary words used to define or explain the unfamiliar word. They should also understand the concepts presented in the text. English learners may need additional prereading activities that explain cultural references and develop their grammatical competence and knowledge of English vocabulary.

Entry-level assessment should also be used to determine the appropriateness of texts for English learners. Whenever possible, authentic texts not simplified for English learners should be used. However, simplified texts may be needed if students have difficulty in learning and if initial entry-level assessment shows that students are unable to use context to determine word meanings

b. Entry-level assessment should also be used to determine the appropriateness of this objective. English learners do not rely on the strategy of learning the meanings of words from context without also learning the necessity of attending to the specific ways in which words are used in writing. Teachers should not assume that English learners will acquire the grammatical rules governing the use of words at the same time they are acquiring the meaning of the words. To teach students the rules, teachers need to provide students with explicit instruction, model the words in speech and writing, encourage students to use words in sentences and in longer text, and provide students with corrective feedback on their use of words.

c. Curricular materials should provide English learners with additional opportunities to read texts that contain similar vocabulary words and grammatical

structures so that students are repeatedly exposed to new words and structures. Some texts should be relevant to the interests and needs of English learners from diverse cultures.

Instructional Materials

1. Texts should contain explicit instruction strategies for identifying words from near-proximity contexts and far-proximity contexts. Sufficient examples of each type should be provided to ensure student mastery of the strategy.
2. Texts should be carefully selected and designed according to critical features, including proximity of the defining context, number of unfamiliar word meanings, richness of the context, readability of the text, text length, and syntactical complexity.
3. Measures for conducting assessment at the entry level and throughout the period of instruction must be included in the curricular materials.

Third Grade English–Language Arts Content Standards

Reading

1.0 Word Analysis, Fluency, and Systematic Vocabulary Development

Students understand the basic features of reading. They select letter patterns and know how to translate them into spoken language by using phonics, syllabication, and word parts. They apply this knowledge to achieve fluent oral and silent reading.

Decoding and Word Recognition

1.1 Know and use complex word families when reading (e.g., *-ight*) to decode unfamiliar words.

1.2 Decode regular multisyllabic words.

1.3 Read aloud narrative and expository text fluently and accurately and with appropriate pacing, intonation, and expression.

Vocabulary and Concept Development

1.4 Use knowledge of antonyms, synonyms, homophones, and homographs to determine the meanings of words.

1.5 Demonstrate knowledge of levels of specificity among grade-appropriate words and explain the importance of these relations (e.g., *dog/mammal/animal/living things*).

1.6 Use sentence and word context to find the meaning of unknown words.

1.7 Use a dictionary to learn the meaning and other features of unknown words.

1.8 Use knowledge of prefixes (e.g., *un-, re-, pre-, bi-, mis-, dis-)* and suffixes (e.g., *-er, -est, -ful*) to determine the meaning of words.

2.0 Reading Comprehension

Students read and understand grade-level-appropriate material. They draw upon a variety of comprehension strategies as needed (e.g., generating and responding to essential questions, making predictions, comparing information from several sources). The selections in *Recommended Literature: Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve* (CDE, 2002) illustrate the quality and complexity of the materials to be read by students. In addition to their regular school reading, by grade four, students read one-half million words annually, including a good representation of grade-level-appropriate narrative and expository text (e.g., classic and contemporary literature, magazines, newspapers, online information). In grade three, students make substantial progress toward this goal.

Structural Features of Informational Materials

2.1 Use titles, tables of contents, chapter headings, glossaries, and indexes to locate information in text.

Comprehension and Analysis of Grade-Level-Appropriate Text

2.2 Ask questions and support answers by connecting prior knowledge with literal information found in, and inferred from, the text.

2.3 Demonstrate comprehension by identifying answers in the text.

2.4 Recall major points in the text and make and modify predictions about forthcoming information.

2.5 Distinguish the main idea and supporting details in expository text.

2.6 Extract appropriate and significant information from the text, including problems and solutions.

2.7 Follow simple multiple-step written instructions (e.g., how to assemble a product or play a board game).

3.0 Literary Response and Analysis

Students read and respond to a wide variety of significant works of children's literature. They distinguish between the structural features of the text and literary terms or elements (e.g., theme, plot, setting, characters). The selections in *Recommended Literature: Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve* (CDE, 2002) illustrate the quality and complexity of the materials to be read by students.

Structural Features of Literature

3.1 Distinguish common forms of literature (e.g., poetry, drama, fiction, nonfiction).

Narrative Analysis of Grade-Level-Appropriate Text

3.2 Comprehend basic plots of classic fairy tales, myths, folktales, legends, and fables from around the world.

3.3 Determine what characters are like by what they say or do and by how the author or illustrator portrays them.

3.4 Determine the underlying theme or author's message in fiction and nonfiction text.

3.5 Recognize the similarities of sounds in words and rhythmic patterns (e.g., alliteration, onomatopoeia) in a selection.

3.6 Identify the speaker or narrator in a selection.

Writing

1.0 Writing Strategies

Students write clear and coherent sentences and paragraphs that develop a central idea. Their writing shows they consider the audience and purpose. Students progress through the stages of the writing process (e.g., prewriting, drafting, revising, editing successive versions).

Organization and Focus

1.1 Create a single paragraph:

a. Develop a topic sentence.

b. Include simple supporting facts and details.

Penmanship

1.2 Write legibly in cursive or joined italic, allowing margins and correct spacing between letters in a word and words in a sentence.

Research

1.3 Understand the structure and organization of various reference materials (e.g., dictionary, thesaurus, atlas, encyclopedia).

Evaluation and Revision

1.4 Revise drafts to improve the coherence and logical progression of ideas by using an established rubric.

2.0 Writing Applications (Genres and Their Characteristics)

Students write compositions that describe and explain familiar objects, events, and experiences. Student writing demonstrates a command of standard American English and the drafting, research, and organizational strategies outlined in Writing Standard 1.0.

Using the writing strategies of grade three outlined in Writing Standard 1.0, students:

2.1 Write narratives:

a. Provide a context within which an action takes place.

b. Include well-chosen details to develop the plot.

c. Provide insight into why the selected incident is memorable.

2.2 Write descriptions that use concrete sensory details to present and support unified impressions of people, places, things, or experiences.

2.3 Write personal and formal letters, thank-you notes, and invitations:

a. Show awareness of the knowledge and interests of the audience and establish a purpose and context.

b. Include the date, proper salutation, body, closing, and signature.

Written and Oral English Language Conventions

The standards for written and oral English language conventions have been placed between those for writing and for listening and speaking because these conventions are essential to both sets of skills.

1.0 Written and Oral English Language Conventions

Students write and speak with a command of standard English conventions appropriate to this grade level.

Sentence Structure

1.1 Understand and be able to use complete and correct declarative, interrogative, imperative, and exclamatory sentences in writing and speaking.

Grammar

1.2 Identify subjects and verbs that are in agreement and identify and use pronouns, adjectives, compound words, and articles correctly in writing and speaking.

1.3 Identify and use past, present, and future verb tenses properly in writing and speaking.

1.4 Identify and use subjects and verbs correctly in speaking and writing simple sentences.

Punctuation

1.5 Punctuate dates, city and state, and titles of books correctly.

1.6 Use commas in dates, locations, and addresses and for items in a series.

Capitalization

1.7 Capitalize geographical names, holidays, historical periods, and special events correctly.

Spelling

1.8 Spell correctly one-syllable words that have blends, contractions, compounds, orthographic patterns (e.g., *qu*, consonant doubling, changing the ending of a word from *-y* to *-ies* when forming the plural), and common homophones (e.g., *hair-hare*).

1.9 Arrange words in alphabetic order.

Listening and Speaking

1.0 Listening and Speaking Strategies

Students listen critically and respond appropriately to oral communication. They speak in a manner that guides the listener to understand important ideas by using proper phrasing, pitch, and modulation.

Comprehension

1.1 Retell, paraphrase, and explain what has been said by a speaker.

1.2 Connect and relate prior experiences, insights, and ideas to those of a speaker.

1.3 Respond to questions with appropriate elaboration.

1.4 Identify the musical elements of literary language (e.g., rhymes, repeated sounds, instances of onomatopoeia).

Organization and Delivery of Oral Communication

1.5 Organize ideas chronologically or around major points of information.

1.6 Provide a beginning, a middle, and an end, including concrete details that develop a central idea.

1.7 Use clear and specific vocabulary to communicate ideas and establish the tone.

1.8 Clarify and enhance oral presentations through the use of appropriate props (e.g., objects, pictures, charts).

1.9 Read prose and poetry aloud with fluency, rhythm, and pace, using appropriate intonation and vocal patterns to emphasize important passages of the text being read.

Analysis and Evaluation of Oral and Media Communications

1.10 Compare ideas and points of view expressed in broadcast and print media.

1.11 Distinguish between the speaker's opinions and verifiable facts.

2.0 Speaking Applications (Genres and Their Characteristics)

Students deliver brief recitations and oral presentations about familiar experiences or interests that are organized around a coherent thesis statement. Student speaking demonstrates a command of standard American English and the organizational and delivery strategies outlined in Listening and Speaking Standard 1.0.

Using the speaking strategies of grade three outlined in Listening and Speaking Standard 1.0, students:

2.1 Make brief narrative presentations:

a. Provide a context for an incident that is the subject of the presentation.

b. Provide insight into why the selected incident is memorable.

c. Include well-chosen details to develop character, setting, and plot.

2.2 Plan and present dramatic interpretations of experiences, stories, poems, or plays with clear diction, pitch, tempo, and tone.

2.3 Make descriptive presentations that use concrete sensory details to set forth and support unified impressions of people, places, things, or experiences.

Curriculum Content

To support the teaching of the technical skills of reading in kindergarten through grades three, effective instructional programs include the elements listed below. These elements are presented in an explicit, sequential, linguistically logical, and systematic manner:

	Foundational Elements: Kindergarten through Grade Three		Grade Level
1	**Phonemic Awareness**		
	a.	Phoneme identification including: counting phonemes in words, distinguishing initial, final, and medial phonemes, and matching initial, final, and medial sounds in spoken words	K-2
	b.	Phoneme blending	K-1
	c.	Phoneme segmentation	K-3
	d.	Phoneme manipulation including: phoneme addition and deletion, grade 1, phoneme substitution, grades 1-2; phoneme reversal	1-3
2	**Phonological Awareness**		
	a.	Recognizing words in sentences	K
	b.	Segmenting words into syllables	K-1
	c.	Detecting rhymes	K-2
	d.	Blending onset/rime	K-1
3	**Phonics**		
	a.	Alphabetic principle including: letter identification grade K, and sound-letter matching	K-1
	b.	Grapheme/Letter-Sound Correspondences including: letter combinations for individual phonemes (e.g., ci, ge, wh, e, oa, igh, _ck, and a_e)	1-3
4	**Decoding and Word Attack Skills**		
	a.	Word structure and fluency, including rapid naming (colors, objects, digits, and letters)	K
	b.	Sight word reading	K-2
	c.	Blending single and multisyllabic words	1-3

	Foundational Elements: Kindergarten through Grade Three		Grade Level
	d.	Recognizing common patterns automatically including: consonants, short vowels (e.g., CVC words and other short vowel syllable patterns), diagraphs, and trigraphs (e.g., _tch, and _igh)	1-3
	e.	Consonant blends, long vowels (CV syllables), and vowel diagraphs	1-3
	f.	Vowel diphthongs and r- and l- controlled vowels	1-3
	g.	Advanced syllable patterns in multisyllabic words	2-3
	h.	Word analysis including word origins and meaning (morphology, syntax, and semantics)	2-3
5	**Oral Reading Fluency**		
	a.	Narrative and expository text for fluency with accuracy and appropriate pacing, intonation, and expression [Fluency defined as words correct per minute (WCPM) with norms identified by Tindal, Hasbrouck, & Jones (2005). Oral Reading Fluency: 90 Years of Measurement, Behavioral Research and Teaching]	1-3
6	**Spelling**		
	a.	Consonant spellings	1-3
	b.	Short vowels	K-1
	c.	Long vowels	1-3
	d.	Orthographic generalizations (rules)	1-3
	e.	Morphemes (prefixes, suffixes, base words and roots)	3
7	**Vocabulary**		
	a.	Oral vocabulary development	K-3
	b.	Suffixes and prefixes	2-3
	c.	Word families	1-2
	d.	Base words and their derivatives	2-3
	e.	Root words and word origins	3
	f.	Context meanings	1-3
	g.	Antonyms and synonyms	2-3
	h.	Metaphors, similes, analogies, and idioms	N/A
	i.	Academic vocabulary	K-3

	Foundational Elements: Kindergarten through Grade Three		Grade Level
8	**Comprehension Skills**		
	a.	Main idea and details	1-3
	b.	Author's point of view	1-3
	c.	Sequencing	1-3
	d.	Classifying and categorizing	K-3
	e.	Making inferences	1-3
	f.	Compare and contrast	2-3
	g.	Cause and effect	1-3
	h.	Author's purpose	1-3
9	**Literary Response and Analysis**		
	a.	Distinguish, identify, and comprehend a variety of genre	K-3
	b.	Identify narrative characteristics of plot, setting, and characters	K-3
	c.	Compare and contrast narrative characteristics of different versions of same stories by different authors and cultures	2-3
	d.	Recognize and analyze underlying or recurring themes in narrative text	2-3
	e.	Recognize characteristics and different forms of poetry	2-3
	f.	Distinguish structural features of text and literary terms or elements of literature and informational text	N/A
	g.	Clarify ideas and making connections between literary works	N/A
	h.	Evaluate meaning of patterns, symbols, and author techniques	N/A
	i.	Determine the credibility of the characterization and degree of realism	N/A
	j.	Analyze a range of responses to literary works	N/A
	k.	Analyze a work of literature, reflecting on author's heritage, traditions, attitudes, and beliefs	N/A

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